

THE LONG NIGHT By Owen Oliver

DECEMBER 1904

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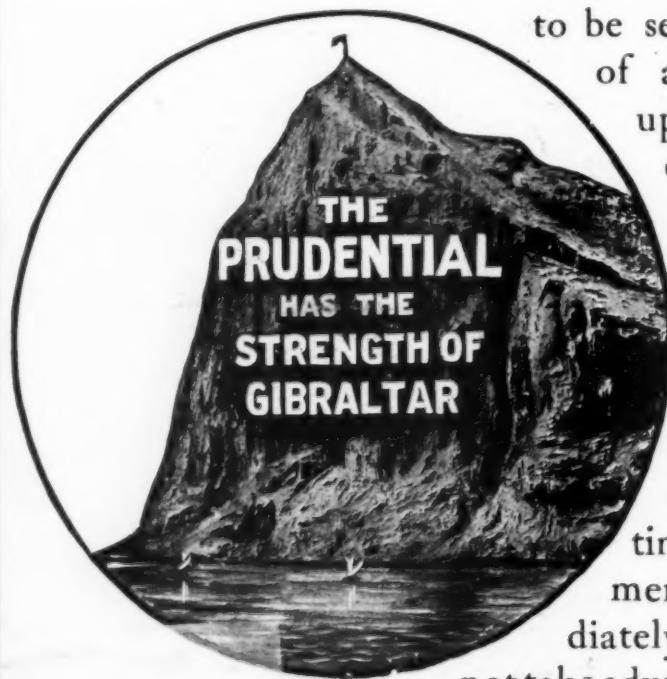
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DRAWN BY WILLIAM SCHMEDTGEN

"We thought it was the dissolution of the world."

"The Long Night;" see page 166

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Barely six months have elapsed since the great change in the revolution of the earth took place; but over a hundred books have already been published dealing with the causes of the change, the effects upon the physical conditions of the world, the disturbance of the calendar, *et cetera*. These treatises contain elaborate tables showing the changes of temperature, the rate of mortality, the migration of population, and the damage to vegetation, buildings and shipping, during the long night in which the earth passed through the greatest crisis of its history; but I have searched them in vain for any picture of the life and sufferings of individuals during this terrible period. Thinking that such a record may be of interest to future generations, I propose, while the events are fresh in my mind, to set down what happened within my own experience.

Like most people, I first heard of the disturbance on the afternoon of the 20th of September. I was returning to my office after lunch, when I found that a crowd had stopped the traffic in Ludgate Circus. I edged my way into it, and dis-

covered that it had formed round some newspaper boys. A tall man had seized one of their placards and was flourishing it aloft:

EVENING NEWS AND POST
THE SUN
13 MINUTES LATE
ELECTRIC DISTURBANCES

The papers gave little more information than the placard. The astronomers at Greenwich had found the sun 13 minutes 13 seconds late in crossing the meridian. They had telegraphed to other observatories, but had obtained a reply from Edinburgh only (where the difference was given as 13 minutes 51 seconds), owing to some unknown electric disturbance which had upset the telegraph wires and cables. It was thought possible that this disturbance had affected the clocks, so that the lateness of the sun was only apparent; but the Astronomer Royal was not of this opinion. Special preparations were being made to test the matter at sunset, which was due at 6:05.

Most people treated the matter as a hoax or jest, till the four o'clock

editions came out. These reported that observations at Greenwich showed that the retardation of the sun's progress continued. Scientific authorities held that this was due either to a slowing of the earth's revolution, or to a change in the direction of its axis in space. The next editions announced that bombs would be fired, at certain places, five minutes after sunset. I went to Westminster Bridge to hear the signal at the Houses of Commons. The crowd seemed to find courage in numbers, and there was a good deal of chaff and some horse-play. Street vendors were selling an atrocious cartoon of a drunken man coming home to his wife. "'Tishn't me that'sh late, my dear," he said. "'It'sh the sun!" Others were hawking a penny pamphlet on the motion of the earth. Some workmen were arguing out the effects upon the eight-hour day.

"If the bloomin' sun don't choose to 'urry 'issell," one said, "yer can knock out by the bloomin' clock. Yer git more time orf, that's all."

"Wot's the good of more time if yer ain't got more money to spend?" another retorted.

"There won't be no more time," a third man insisted. "They'll shut at 'arf-past twelve all the same."

A heated discussion upon closing time followed. A youth started playing a mouth-organ, and several couples danced to the music. At a minute to six the scene was like a fair.

When Big Ben struck six, however, the crowd suddenly sobered. The long hand crept on to five, and then to ten. When the quarter struck the crowd drew a deep breath. It sounded like the sighing of the wind.

"It seems very light," I observed to my neighbor.

"Horribly light," he agreed hoarsely.

The long hand crept on to twenty and twenty-five. The half-hour struck, and still there was no sign. Several of the crowd left to go home. They looked scared, and some of the women held their handkerchiefs to their eyes.

"Makes you wonder what's going on up *there*," said a man on my left. He pointed shakily to the skies, till the umbrella dropped from his shaking hand. "Gets on your nerves, this waiting," he apologized as he picked it up.

"We can only be patient," said a pale man mildly. A hawker thrust a cartoon in front of his face, and he seized it and tore it across in sudden fury. "Get out with your foolery!" he shouted.

"Get out!" shouted the crowd, and the hawkers were hustled across the bridge.

A man who had been drinking from a bottle began singing a ribald song. The crowd handled him roughly, till half a dozen policemen formed round him and took him away. Then there was a dead silence till a quarter to seven struck. One could feel the crowd shiver, and a woman began sobbing.

"Come, come!" her man remonstrated. "What's the use of taking on? Supposing the sun never sets at all, where's the harm?"

"Supposing it sets and never rises again?" she asked. Her voice was almost a scream.

A gaunt man got up on the parapet and prayed fervently that God, who spanned the heavens with His hand, would guide our little world safely through the changes of the universe. The women stopped crying, and the men uncovered their heads. There were loud cries of "Amen" when he ceased,

Immediately after—at 6:50, almost exactly—there was a flash and a loud report. The sun had set, forty minutes late, at 6:45.

The crowd melted slowly away, and I went home to Dulwich, where I lived with my married sister. Her husband met me in the hall, and whispered that he had told her that it was only the clocks that were wrong. She whispered to me in the dining room, "I know, Fred. I know! I've seen the papers. Don't tell him, then he won't worry so much about me."

We tried to make conversation, but there were long pauses, and we kept glancing at the clock. They went to bed early. I sat up and smoked and paced the room, and wondered what Myra Davis thought about it. We had been engaged, but we had quarreled six months before.

At midnight, by the clock, I went to bed. I woke before five, and got out to watch for the sunrise. It was due at 5:44, so it should begin to get light before five. If it was an hour late the forelight should commence about six. At half-past five the night was as black as ink. The electric lamps in the streets had gone out. I lit the gas and tried to read, but could not fix my attention on the magazine. Suppose the sun never rose again, as the woman had suggested? Suppose the earth had fallen from its orbit? Suppose it was being drawn, with gradually increasing velocity, into the fiery sun? I imagined these and a hundred other horrible things, till my hair nearly stood on end. At a little after six o'clock I put out my light, and peeped through the blind. It was still pitch dark. I wondered if Myra was peeping through her blind, and if *she* was frightened. She lived with her widowed mother

at Upper Tulse Hill, and they had no male relative near.

The quarter went and still there was no sign of the light. At seven, however, the inky blackness had turned to gray-black. I opened my window and stood there watching the familiar objects appear one by one. My teeth chattered in spite of my thick dressing-gown. The morning was colder than usual, no doubt owing to the longer night. As nearly as I could reckon, sunrise came at a few minutes to eight—over two hours late!

My brother-in-law was not down to breakfast. He had not slept well, my sister said, but now he had fallen into a doze, and she would not wake him. Her hand shook so that she spilt my coffee in passing it. When I rose to go she put her hand on my arm.

"They will be very lonely and frightened," she said. "I know it wasn't your fault, but—" She looked at me appealingly.

"It wasn't all her fault," I confessed. "If I thought that she wanted me I would go but she'd be sure to say she didn't. Well, I'll risk it—Good old Sis!"

I kissed her, and went to Upper Tulse Hill.

Myra opened the door herself. She made a little choking sound, and clutched at my arm.

"I knew you would come," she said. "Mother is in Germany; and the servants left me last night. I thought it was the end of the world."

I stayed with her for half an hour, and made her eat some breakfast. She came to Herne Hill Station and saw me off. I arranged to go back in the afternoon and take her to my sister's.

When I got to the city I found most of the offices shut, and mine

among the number. People were staying home with their families to wait events. Only a few of the "evening papers" came out, and these at irregular intervals. A cabinet council was sitting to consider the situation, and a number of eminent scientists had been summoned to attend. Later in the morning a notice was posted up in thick black type:—

**PUBLIC WARNING
THE CHANGES IN THE TIME**

The changes in the length of the day are undoubtedly due to an unknown force, which produces a progressive diminution in the revolution of the earth.

It is conjectured that this force emanates from a non-luminous and invisible "comet," passing the earth in a direction opposite to its revolution, but the disturbances cannot be completely explained on this or any other hypothesis. As gravity has not drawn the "comet" to the earth, it must be either immaterial or exceedingly attenuated. No danger need therefore be apprehended from collision, but serious electrical results are to be feared in the event of contact.

Upon this hypothesis the lengthening of the day and night will continue until the "comet" has passed out of range.

The lengthening of day and night will produce great extremes of heat and cold, increasing as the periods are lengthened. All persons are advised to make preparations for securing warmth during a night possibly of greatly increased duration.

Should the retardation continue at the present rate the earth's revolution would cease at about 3:30 a.m. on the 28th of September, when the British Isles would be upon the side of the earth remote from the sun. In such unfortunate event these countries would speedily become ice-bound and uninhabitable. The

Government is making every effort to provide shipping for such a contingency, but it is impossible to obtain the full number of ships needed by Government action. Local authorities and private individuals are therefore urged to take every possible opportunity of securing transport.

In view of the purely conjectural nature of the information at present available, all persons are advised to refrain from flight until further data have been obtained. All available information will be promulgated immediately, but it must be borne in mind that telegraphic communication is greatly delayed by the electrical disturbances.

In spite of the notice, every one seemed preparing for flight eastward. I telegraphed to my brother-in-law advising him to go, drew out all my money (some £200) from the bank, which fortunately was open, and hurried to Tulse Hill for Myra. We packed a small handbag and went back to town, arriving about five. There was a fresh notice up:—

Noon over three hours late at Greenwich—All telegraphic communication has failed.

We intended to take tickets at Cook's by whatever routes they advised; but we could not get near the offices on account of the crowd. At half-past five a notice was put up that every berth in every steamer was sold. We decided to go down to the South Coast in the hope of finding a vessel, or even a boat, for the Continent, proposing then to travel to the Mediterranean by train, and take a ship thence to the East. We tried Ludgate Hill, Cannon Street and Charing Cross in turn, but the approach to each station was blocked by a frantic crowd.

We had some tea at a shop in Whitehall and talked the matter

over. Myra, who kept her nerve splendidly, suggested that we should buy cycles and ride down to Dover. We walked over Westminster Bridge, found a shop, and bought them. I tied the bag on behind mine and we started. It was 7:30 then, and very hot. The sun evidently would not set for hours, unless some great catastrophe happened. The fear of this was always with us.

For the first hour the road was crowded with a hurrying mob; buses holding double their number; wagons and carts loaded with people and their goods; men and women with their children on barrows, or in mail carts. One man had put wheels to a sugar box to convey his baby. A little beyond Eltham we passed out of the crowd of pedestrians, but cyclists and motorists still flew by. The villagers stared at us in amazement. The proclamations had not reached so far, owing to the breakdown in the telegraph. The sun set a little before we came to Rochester, but the light was still good when we arrived there at half-past eleven.

Myra was too tired to ride any further, so we put up at a hotel in the main street, called the King's Head. Most of the waiters and servants had caught the panic from the fugitives and fled to



"Cyclists still flew by."

the coast, so we had to wait a long time for supper. We ate it by the light of our cycle lamps, as the electric light had failed. Then we went to bed. My room was in the front, and the noise of the unceasing traffic kept me awake for some time. Then I slept till eight. There was no sign of the dawn and I dozed again till ten. It was still dark, and I felt so chilly that I doubled the counterpane. At eleven the landlady brought a candle and I dressed and joined Myra in the coffee room. A fire had been lit, and we sat over it after breakfast. It was pitch dark outside; no lamps, no moon, no stars. We decided to remain at the hotel till the sun rose—if it ever did.

Two motorists who stopped for food said that there was a horrible panic in London, and thousands of people who could get no conveyance were walking down. There was no fresh news up to the time they left.

A faint light began about two o'clock (just after lunch). We started soon after the half hour. The temperature was nearly at freezing point. The sun rose just as we had wheeled our machines up Chatham Hill, and came to Jezreal's Temple. We stood watching it. The same thought occurred to both, and we shivered.

"If it *is* the last time," Myra comforted me, "we've seen it together!" She touched my arm and smiled. She was a great help to me all through this terrible period.

I had a punctured tire, and Myra's right ankle was weak. So we did not reach Dover till twelve o'clock—midnight of the 22nd of September according to the old calendar. It was beginning to get very hot. The approaches to the pier were stopped by pickets of soldiers, and a young officer told me that I could not go any further. There were already more people waiting than could be embarked in a month, and there had been several fatal riots. The general was trying to get the women and children shipped first, but he feared that the mob would be too strong for the soldiers.

"I'll try to pass you on, if you wish," he told Myra; "but I don't suppose you'd leave your—your friend?—Of course not. I could see you weren't that sort!"

He advised us to make our way back towards the Isle of Sheppey, and try to catch a Flushing steamer from Queenboro' Pier, or a Government vessel at Sheerness Dockyard, where they had sent the ladies of the garrison. He gave us his card—Captain R. Winston, R.A.,—with a penciled introduction to the commandant at Sheerness. Then we shook hands and left him. He was frozen at his post during the long night, we learned afterwards.

After a hasty meal we made our way to Canterbury, avoiding the main road as much as possible, as I did not like the look of some of the crowd on it. We both had punctures, and had to walk for miles before we found a repairing shop. So we did not reach Canterbury till after four on the morning of the 23rd of September (old time). It was

early afternoon by the sun, and the heat was overpowering. Myra was exhausted, and we rested till half-past six. Then we took the main road, hoping to reach Sheerness before it was dark. The road was infested with roughs, and we passed several people who had been forcibly robbed of their machines. At Boughton a huge tramp threw me off my cycle. As he stooped to pick it up Myra pluckily ran into him and rolled him over. I knocked him down as he rose, and regained my machine.

We reached Sittingbourne at ten o'clock, old time, just before sunset. I did not know the shorter way through the back streets, so went on to Key Street. The inn at the corner, where we should leave the London Road, had been sacked by a gang of roughs. They caught hold of us as we were passing, and took our machines. They tried to detain Myra, but I seized one of their sticks and kept them at bay while she ran on. Then I broke away and overtook her. Fortunately, they were too drunk to run fast.

It was almost dark when we reached Bobbing, but Myra urged me to go on. She was weak and unstrung, and we walked very slowly. At about twelve she suddenly swayed and fainted. When she revived she could not walk for a long time, and then she had to rest every few yards. After several attempts she collapsed completely. I sat down and let her sleep with her head on my knees. This was at 2 p.m. on the 23rd of September, old time. I tried to rouse her several times, but could not. At about four I must have fallen asleep myself. When I woke my teeth chattered with the cold, and our knees were so numbed that we could not stand for some minutes. I struck a match and found that the

time was half-past nine. We stumbled along arm in arm, but her ankle was painful, and we went very slowly. We lost the road several times, and once we fell over a heap of stones. No light was visible above or below. It grew horribly cold, and my mustache was frozen stiff.

After some hours of wandering, Myra could walk no longer and became unconscious. I crouched under the shelter of a hedge, holding her in my arms. I was drowsy and almost senseless with the cold. Then I heard a dog bark and carried her toward the sound, painfully and a few steps at a time. Presently I saw a candlelight in a window about fifty yards away. It took me ten minutes to carry her so far. When they opened the cottage door we fell helplessly inside.

The old couple who lived in the cottage—it was at Iwade—rolled us up in blankets, and fed us with spoonfuls of milk with coarse spirits in it. As soon as we felt a little warmth we fell asleep. When I woke they had come downstairs and lit the fire, and were getting breakfast. They had double clothing on, and looked like Esquimaux. They had never felt the cold like it, they said. It was after seven o'clock of the morning of the 24th



"The highroad was crowded."

of September, and the sun had been down for twenty-one hours. It was surely the end of the world, the old woman quavered.

After breakfast we shivered over the fire for an hour. Then a pale light streamed in at the window. We saw the fields and trees white with the snow and frost. It was one o'clock before we thought it warm enough to venture out. Patches of snow were still lying in the shadows, and there were dead sheep and horses in the fields. Near the ferry bridge we saw the bodies of a man and woman among the straw beside a haystack. Thin sheets of ice were floating on the river.

We reached Queenboro' Pier at half-past three, on what should have been the afternoon of the 24th of September, but the sun was still low in the east. A steamer was about to leave the end of the pier, and a huge crowd was struggling to get upon it. Hundreds were trampled under foot, and many were pushed off the pier into the water and drowned. Ten times the proper number were aboard already, an old man told us. They were beating back those who still tried to get on. When the vessel began to move men and women jumped after it, and fell into the water. One man threw his little child right among the people aboard.

At last the vessel was out of reach, and the crowd gave a shriek such as I hope never to hear again.

We went on to Sheerness and found Colonel Lemain, the military commandant—a courteous, gray-haired old soldier—and presented Captain Winston's card. The colonel was very kind, and said that he would gladly have given us a passage if he could, but there was not even a steam pinnace left.

"A good many people are trying to reach the Continent in rowing boats," he told us. "I'll put you in one with some respectable people, if you like; but I don't recommend you to go. If you don't reach the Continent before night you will be frozen to death. If you do I don't suppose you'll find a train. If you find a train, it couldn't get far enough east to save you, except by the mercy of God. *That* can save you here. The great thing is to provide for keeping warm during the night. I am sending out pickets to bring in all the fugitives who have no home; and I've commandeered all the public buildings and hotels and am laying in provisions and bedding and fuel. They're a pretty rough crowd, so far as I've seen yet. You'll be better in a private house, and the small rooms are warmer. There's 58 Marine Parade. Major Peters lived there, but I sent him off in a steamer with his family, as his wife was ill. I'll assign that to you. Let me know if I can do anything more. Good morning."

We thanked him and made our way to the house and took possession. We found food and drink and a change of clothes. We slept during the heat of the day (which was thirty hours from sunrise to sunset). When it grew cooler we took a walk through the town. We

met the colonel and he took us to see the arrangements for the refugees. There were nearly two thousand, mostly from the slums of London. He had gathered them together in the neighborhood of "Bank's Town," in the Victoria Hall and attached buildings, the two big workmen's clubs, the Royal Hotel, and Trinity Church, and kept them there with armed sentries so that they should not pillage the town. He had commandeered the houses in the main street for some who were more respectable than the rest. All the public houses were shut up, and pickets of soldiers searched from house to house and took any superfluous liquor. Huge stacks of fuel were laid in for warming the various buildings, and great stores of provisions. The soldiers worked untiringly and without a murmur, and the officers hardest of all.

When the sun neared the horizon Myra and I said good-bye to the colonel, and went back to our house. We selected the dining room for our winter quarters. I laid the fire and carried up a large supply of coal and wood, while Myra filled the cupboards with food and drink. Then we collected all the blankets and rugs in the house. Then we sat at the open window and watched the sun set. It was three o'clock in the afternoon of the 25th of September, old reckoning.

The twilight lasted for at least two hours, and it was still very hot after the prolonged day. A few people strolled up and down the esplanade, and presently a little group spoke to us, and we went out and joined them. One was the dock-yard schoolmaster, and he had some knowledge of astronomy. He reckoned that the force acting on the earth was one which reduced the



DRAWN BY WILLIAM SCHMETZGEN

"It was surely the end of the world, the old woman quavered." See page 161

rate of revolution of a point on the equator by about five miles an hour, and that it would bring the earth to rest an hour or so before the next sunrise, if it went on at the same rate; but he had an idea that the force would diminish as the earth was stopping, so that the sun would crawl on to our longitude. In this case we should have perpetual day instead of perpetual night. We need not give up hope till midnight of the 28th of September, he said, some eighty hours after sunset.

We went to supper with him and his wife and some friends. After supper we tried music, cards, story telling and half a dozen other amusements, but could not fix our minds on any. We did not like to part company, and after many hours we had another supper; and even then we lingered.

About twelve hours after sunset a tremendous rain storm came on. We waited for hours. Then we all dozed in our chairs. Our host woke us at nineteen hours after sunset. It



DRAWN BY WILLIAM SCHMEDTGEN

"A huge crowd was struggling to get upon the steamer." See page 162

had grown very cold and he had lit a fire. The rain had ceased, and he advised us to get back to our houses, as he doubted if he had sufficient food for us all.

The rain had frozen in the road, and we slipped and fell several times. It was pitch dark and I had to crawl up the icy steps and strike matches to look at the numbers on the doors. At last we found our house, and went in, shivering with cold. The electric light had failed, and we had only one candle, which we wished to save. So we used the fire, which I lit, for light as well as warmth. It was pleasant for a time sitting on the hearth-rug. We decided to keep a diary, and I jotted down the events in a little blank account-book with the stump of a pencil, by the light of the fire. I think these rough entries tell our story better than any fine account that I could write.

19½ hours after sunset. Returned to house. Freezing hard outside. Lit fire, and put on overcoat and winter jacket. Icicles on window, visible by firelight.

22 hours. Noticed we had forgotten kettle. Fetched from scullery. Water inside frozen in solid block. On melting, discovered kettle had burst. Found smaller one. Breakfasted.

28 hours. Woke from doze very cold. Lunched.

33 hours. Cold increasing. Made huge fire. Chimney caught. No damage. Had to open door to let out smoke. Cold air almost unbearable.

34 hours. Dined.

37 hours. Several mice came out and sat in fender. Myra nervous, but would not let me drive them away. Fed them with crumbs. She slept on sofa, and I in arm-chair.

41 hours. Discovered that neither of us had slept. We wish to make our wills. We leave everything to each other if either survives. If not she leaves her possessions to her mother, and I leave mine to my sister.

Myra Davis. Fredk. Lester.

44 hours. Frost cracked a window-pane. We should probably have suffocated in our sleep if this had not happened. Stuck brown paper over pane with marmalade. Windows thick with ice. Went downstairs and saw water pipe burst in many places, with long rods of ice jutting out from it. Breakfasted.

48 hours. Myra faint and hysterical. Went upstairs to search for smelling salts. Frozen door handle skinned my fingers. Almost overcome by cold and reached dining room with great difficulty.

50 hours. The front wall suddenly gaped in a huge crack, just over the cupboard, doubtless from frost. Fetched door-mat from passage at great risk from cold, cut it in pieces and filled cracks and poured in water, which froze, and stopped them up except for some tiny holes. We thought these were necessary for ventilation, as we were both very drowsy.

56 hours. Woke by Myra putting coal on fire, which was nearly out. Cold unspeakably terrible. Took an hour to boil water. Myra started to make mittens for our hands and masks for our faces out of old flannel. Found work very difficult through numbed fingers.

58 hours. Myra completed masks and mittens. A great comfort.

60 hours. Sun due to stop. Prayed. We wish to set down that we have been happy together during this awful time.

64 hours. Saw faint light through

window. Thought dawn coming.

65 hours. Planet four times size of moon rose over sea to northeast. Sea apparently frozen, but could not see plainly through frost on glass.

(We did not then know that the moon had come permanently nearer the earth.)

67 hours. Terrific crash from direction of sea. Myra fainted.

(This of course was due to the ice falling in, when the moon drew the sea from underneath it. We thought it was the dissolution of the world.)

68 hours. Planet disappeared.

71 hours. Fire low. Had to crawl on hands and knees to make it up, being very weak.

75 hours. Same.

80 hours. Same.

83 hours. Air full of specks of bright light.

(Generally ascribed to luminous tail of comet. Continued as long as I noticed.)

86 hours. Decided to lie near fire, so that we could make it up without moving.

90 hours. Myra crawled to cupboard and placed provisions within reach. We have can of water in fender.

98 hours. Made up fire. Cold killing us.

101 hours. Same.

104 hours. Same.

108 hours. Same. God—mercy.

The pencil dropped from my fingers after I made the last entry. I remember very little afterwards. Myra, whose fingers were not so numb as mine, put a biscuit in my mouth once or twice. Now and then one of us threw a lump of coal

faintly at the fire. Sometimes it went on. Sometimes it missed. I was delirious and saw things in the fire. We kept saying good-bye to one another. At last she did not answer. I made a tremendous effort and put some coal on and kissed the mask over her face. Then I think I fainted.

When I roused there was a faint light at the window, a white light, not like the light of the big moon, or fiery dust. I thought at first that I dreamed it. Presently I saw the face of the clock—then the hands. Three o'clock. Five days since sunset; and now the sun had risen—in the west!

You can read in the books how the day and night shortened again till we came to the present solar day of 28 hours, 11 minutes, 51 $\frac{1}{4}$ seconds; how the seas and tides changed with this and the drawing nearer of the moon, so that there was water where continents had been, and fresh continents grew out of the sea, covered with the bones of monsters of the deep; how many were killed by the cold (and in the East by the heat) and some survived, and life for those who lived was changed. But the books leave out the greatest thing of all, the change that happened to thousands and thousands who went through the long night, as it happened to my dear Myra and me—the widening, deepening and strengthening of our love, by the troubles that we had passed through together. And when we come to a difficult place in our daily life, as men and women still come, we look in one another's eyes a moment, and whisper, "The long night—The long night!"

As Queens Are Wedsmith

BY ANNE WARNER

Totty's mother sat at her desk. Totty stood just beside her mother. The eyes of Totty's mother were bent upon the sheets spread out before her. Totty's eyes were uplifted to her mother's face. Totty's mother was dark haired and dark-eyed, with a mouth that often quivered when she was alone, but always smiled when she looked at Totty. Totty was small and round and dimpled—a species of cherubic fluff-ball done in pink and white, with flashes of golden sunshine and dashes of heaven's own blue.

Totty's mother held her left hand upon a great bunch of long, uneven sheets of paper. They had been tightly rolled, and curled most unpleasantly in consequence. Each sheet bore at the top a species of curious title, the first being "as queens Are wedsmith,"—the second and third "As queens are wed murphy,"—and those following "as Queens are Wed sullivan." Along the wide margin ran a series of mysterious dots and dashes, "tr—?—?" etc.

Totty's mother held her pen in her right hand and added freely to the mystery, occasionally going so far as to scratch out words and write in others without seeming to notice how badly the page looked anyhow.

Totty—always standing watching her mother and her mother's pen—observed it, though, and wondered what Mademoiselle would say if she were to do likewise in *her* writing lesson. The wonder was rampant and poignant, but it went unvoiced because the little maiden knew that when her mother was at work she must never be spoken to. It was amusing anyway, just to stand quietly

by and see a wise mamma making silly dots and dashes—for Totty was a sweetly tranquil Totty and easily amused. But there comes a time when all varieties of patience cease to become virtues, and after a full half hour of silent waiting Totty suddenly perceived a second roll of the papers lying on the back of the desk and, seeing them, decided that longer delay was unadvisable.

So, when the mamma put out her hand for that second roll, and at the same time passed the other hand caressingly over the little head at her elbow, Totty spoke.

"Mamma," she said, "I want you to make my dolly some clo'es."

It was the dearest little voice imaginable, and the sweet smile that accompanied it went so quickly to the mother-heart that all the pre-occupation vanished from her face, and she stooped—smiling herself—to kiss the little rosebud mouth.

"Hasn't Dolly a whole trunkful of clothes now?" she asked, as she ripped the paper-band from the proof-sheets, "she never looks needy to me."

"They is all wore out," chirped Totty in her earnest staccato, "I want you to make her some nice new ones."

Adelaide unrolled the roll in her hand, glanced at the head-line, "as queens are wdSmith," and rolled the whole, hard, the wrong way, to try to take the kink out of the sheets.

Totty pressed, kitten-like, closer.

"Well," she said, "is you goin' to or isn't you?"

The mother put a brass frog down on the curling sheets and then, turning, picked the small girl up in her arms.

"Oh, the Totty! the Totty!" she said, laughing softly, "the Totty that is still too little to understand!"—then she turned Totty's chin up and kissed her sweetly puckered lips. "Darling," she said to the great eyes whose blueness reflected her own, "if you'll only be patient for 'two, free' weeks more, I promise you that Santa Claus shall work night and day until, when Christmas comes, Dolly shall have clothes fit for a princess,—and then, when Christmas is over, you and I are going 'way away to a fairy land where we'll live in a cardboard house with straw carpets, eat rice with chopsticks, and sit cross-legged on the floor. Won't that be fun?"

Totty looked woefully non-committal.

"And Dolly shall have a sister dolly with slant eyes and a pigtail. Won't *that* be funny?"

But Totty refused to smile.

"I wanted you to make my dolly some clo'es," she said, almost mournfully.

Adelaide struck the little call-bell upon her desk. A young Frenchwoman in a black dress and white ruffled apron appeared almost at once in the door beyond.

"Louise," said Totty's mother, "I want you to take Totty and go straight down-town and let her buy everything necessary for some new dolls' clothes. The dolly needs some new clothes."

Totty—still unsmiling—slipped from her mother's knee and went to Mademoiselle.

"But I wanted *you* to make 'em," she murmured mother-ward as she left the room. Adelaide heard the soft little reproach and smiled and sighed together, as she lifted the brass frog from "as queens are wed Smith," and went on with her work. It was hard and wearisome,

even if Totty had regarded it as futile and entertaining, and when the whole was complete and the pen put aside and the cramped fingers outspread to rest—the bell rang and the postman left another roll, bigger than the first two put together.

Very late that night—long hours after Totty was slumbering—her mother remained over the writhing sheets, "as queens are wed Smith—As queens are wed Sullivan—etc.—etc."

The next morning Totty stood by her mother's side again. In her arms she held the most Parisian of dolls. From the bonnet with its bit of an ostrich tip, to the chiffon puffing that trimmed the edge of the skirt, the toilette was a dream out of a Champs-Elysées May afternoon. And yet Totty appeared unhappy. The mother laid aside her pen and took the dolly up to admire.

"Isn't she be-yew-ti-ful?" she said in ecstasy.

"I don't sink so," said Totty, "I wanted you to make her her clo'es."

"But I could never make anything as lovely as that dress," said Adelaide, laying the doll back in the little one's arms—"never in this world, Totty."

Totty looked doubtful and then a tear fell on the pink ostrich tip.

At that the mother dropped the pen she had just picked up, and swept the baby suddenly into her lap.

"Oh, Totty—Totty, don't—you truly mustn't," she cried with painful fervor, "I can't bear it—you know I can't bear it. I *will* make the dolly some clothes. Really and truly. Just as soon as I've done this work. It's important, Totty—more important than you can understand. If it weren't I'd stop right off and make them now. Can't you



DRAWN BY D. J. LAVIN

"I want you to make my dolly some clo'es."

wait? Just till next week. Just one little week, my precious, precious Totty-baby-girl?"

"Yes, I'll wait," said Totty quietly—and closed her eyes—and leaned her head against her mother's arm.

Adelaide struck the call-bell for Mademoiselle.

"Louise, Totty's sleepy. Please carry her in for her nap."

The young French woman stooped beside her mistress, gathered the little one gently up in her arms, and bore her away to her crib.

Late that afternoon there came two more rolls; the first ones were not ready to return, although they only needed wrapping and addressing. A telegram arrived about five, requesting that they be forwarded

as promptly as possible. Adelaide rolled them up quickly and was about to address one when she was interrupted. It was Mademoiselle.

"I beg Madame's pardon for disturbing her, but I fear the little one is not well."

"Totty!"

The cry was piercing.

The pen fell to the floor. The mother's hand went up to the side of her head. She stared wildly at the maid.

"I didn't hear you, I think.—You didn't say—you *surely* didn't say that Totty was ill?"

"Oh, Madame, I fear it."

Adelaide sprang to her feet and flew through the intervening rooms to where her baby lay in the canopied brass crib, a little girl whose eyes were shut and whose cheeks were brightly crimson. The mother seized the small hand that lay upon the counterpane, and the small hand scorched her own.

"Oh, my dear God, it is true," she cried, half aloud and half to herself.

Totty opened her eyes and looked at her mother.

"I wanted you to make my dolly some clo'es," she said in a numb sort of way, and shut her eyes again.

The mother closed her own eyes and held tightly to the bed for support for a single brief half-minute. Then she was out of that room and at the telephone.

"It's Totty," she wailed to the physician who had by chance replied, himself, "it's Totty! And you must come right off, and as fast as you can, and bring a nurse—two nurses—ten—anything—everything! I am crazy—beside myself—oh, Totty—Totty—"

The doctor came at once. He brought a nurse, but when he saw the

little one he laughed at her mother's anxiety.

"It's only a feverish cold," he said lightly, "not worth an instant's worry. She'll be up in two days."

He was putting on his coat as he spoke and his voice was cheery and reassuring. Adelaide was standing by the window—her back towards him. She did not move or speak, and he went nearer and saw that she was sobbing.

"It is really nothing," he said gently and very, very kindly, "be brave—she is going to be all right."

The mother burst into tears.

"You know there is only Totty," she cried, "Totty is my world—Totty is my all—"

The kind friend soothed and quieted her all that was possible and finally left her—not sobbing—but still standing there by the window.

She continued to stand there until, an hour later, Totty awoke, and then she stole in to kneel at the bedside and watch the giving of the prescribed medicine. Totty took the medicine as tranquilly and sweetly as she took life in general.

"Is you done your book?" she said to her mother, whom she perceived to be kneeling—therefore idle. "If you is, why can't you make my dolly some clo'es now?"

The mother could not speak, but she smiled, and the next morning found her seated beside the crib, sewing busily. Totty, awaking, was infinitely content over the prospect, and watched her progress until she fell asleep again.

Two more great rolls of proof arrived during the morning, but Adelaide continued to sew. Then a telegram came, and still she sewed. After luncheon Totty was expected to awake, and failed to do so. Her cheeks grew more brightly crimson and her breath came in a gasp and



DRAWN BY D. J. LAVIN

“You must come as fast as you can.”

went in a sigh. Another telegram arrived, but it remained unopened. The doctor followed shortly after, and while he was there Adelaide rose from her seat, folded up her sewing, put it away, and went back to her place at the window.

A very urgent telegram was sent up about six o'clock.

"Say that my baby is ill," said the mother to the messenger, "have them answer it from the office."

Then a long night began—a night during which Totty fought valiantly for the power to breathe at all, and lost strength hourly.

By the first morning train Willoughby himself came down. Adelaide was forced to receive him—if it could be called receiving a man to let him come in where his hostess sat with her eyes closed and her two hands fast clenched together.

She did not look at him or speak, and he did not even sit down.

"I'm going to take all the proof back with me," he said in a hushed voice. "I'll go over it all myself. Don't give another thought to it."

She said nothing.

"You must forgive my telegraphing," he said. "You see, I couldn't understand—I didn't know. And every hour was so precious. But never mind—we'll get it out by Christmas just the same."

Then she looked at him.

"Get it out by Christmas!" she said, "by Christmas!—my book?"

"Why, yes," he said, "your book—of course."

"But that can't be," she said, "you mustn't."

"Mustn't what?"

"Do anything more about it."

Willoughby looked blankly at her. "It's all at an end," she said.

Then he approached nearer.

"How can it all be at an end with the first edition sold already and——"

Adelaide put up her hand.

"Oh, don't—" she cried in a tone of acute agony—"it's no use. It must be over. It must be ended. I never could bear even to hear the name. The money would be blood-money. She—she wanted her doll dressed—and I—I put her aside on account of *it*.—Oh, I can never bear to think of it. Don't talk any more—only go—please go. Go now. I want to be alone. If you've lost any money charge it to my account, but don't trouble me in this hour."

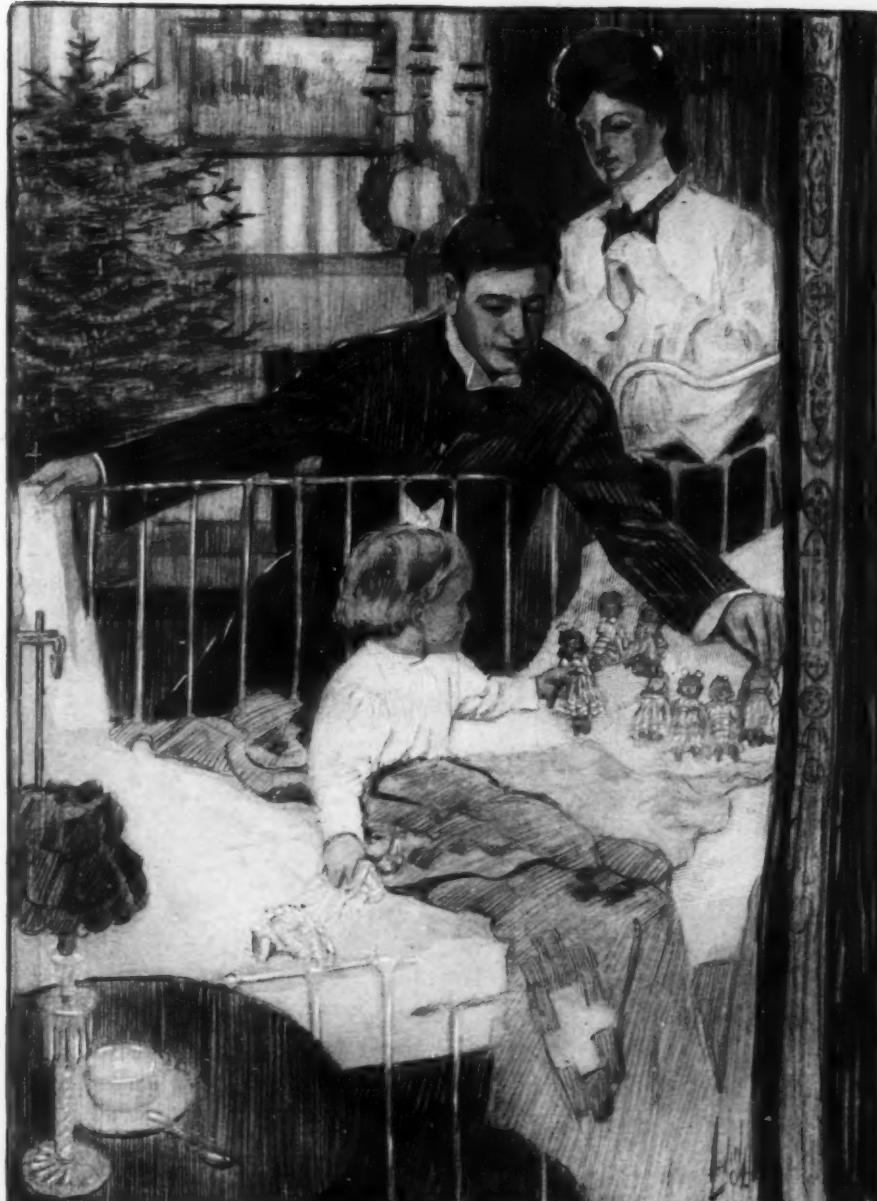
Willoughby stood still just half-way between where she sat, and the table whereon the rolls lay. He did not look at the rolls, but he looked long at her. She was weeping—her face hidden in her hands.

"I won't trouble you now," he said at last very gently, and went away.

The space is so brief between the darkness that lies before the dawn, and the dawn itself, that no one should be surprised to know that Totty reconquered the kingdom of her breath at last, and smiled again upon her mother.

Christmas Day found the dear little thing, white rather than pink, but quite able to be pillow-proped to the end that she might embrace her doll (mother-gowned from top to toe) and admire a Christmas tree that grew in a large *jardinière* and had its branches loaded with small beings whom she elected to call "cheer-ups," even though the dictionary pronounces them as cherubic.

Willoughby, drifting down by the morning train, was admitted into this earthly Paradise and allowed to sit on the other side of Totty while he feasted his eyes on the divine joy that glorified the face of Totty's mother opposite him.



DRAWN BY D. J. LAVIN

“ ‘ I wonder what I shall do with them,’ said Willoughby.”

After awhile some deft turns of the conversation led Totty to desire to feel in the caller's pockets, only as there were difficulties attendant on Totty's moving from her little nest, the obliging visitor undertook to feel in his own pockets. The results were both astonishing and delightful, for Santa Claus had put a doll no bigger than Tom Thumb in every one of the seven pockets.

"I wonder what I shall do with them," said Willoughby, frankly overjoyed at the prospect of seven dolls all his own.

Totty was silent, then—

"You *could* give 'em to me," she suggested in a tone the careful indifference of which was truly admirable under the circumstances.

"Oh, never," said the owner of the dolls, "never."

"But—but—" Totty began, a little flush sunshining her thin little face, "I'll take care of 'em for you an' let you have 'em every time you come."

"And may I come often?"

"Every day," Totty declared.

"What will the mamma say to that?" Willoughby asked, laughing.

Adelaide was smiling, but when he looked at her he fancied the sunshine flush upon her face also.

"Totty must sleep now," she said, abruptly.

"And so must my dolls," the man declared; "I'm going to lay them all on this pillow and when they wake they'll be Totty's dolls."

Adelaide had risen and was leaning over the little bed.

"Oh, my Totty," she said tenderly, "my dear sweet little Christmas girl. Just to think I have you all safe in your little bed this happy, happy day!"

Totty smiled cheerfully on her mother and on the man who was now standing behind her mother.

"She made my dolly *lots* of clo'es," she said *apropos* of the general joy.

The nurse entered just then and the others went out to leave the little invalid in quiet.

"I wonder how much those dolls' clothes cost!" Willoughby remarked as he took a chair in the parlor.

"What difference does it make when Totty's getting well?" said Adelaide.

"If the bill was not over ten thousand dollars apiece we may consider ourselves lucky," he added.

Adelaide smiled.

"As much as that," she said cheerfully, "well, I can't realize it. All I can realize is that Totty's getting better."

"Happy Totty," the man said slowly—and then he was silent for several minutes—and then he stood up—"no one else ever has any show," he said vaguely.

Adelaide raised her eyes.

"No one else," she said wonderingly, "why, who else should there be?"

He moved nearer and stood there, looking down upon her, and then into her uplifted face there crept surprise—then doubt—then understanding—and then a royal burning blush.

He bent above her.

"*Is* there any one besides Totty?" he whispered.

"Oh," she said, with fluttering lips, "I—I—never—"

He drew her into his arms.

"But I always," he laughed softly. "Yes, truly. For years, and years, and years."

"As Queens are Wed" (minus "smith") came out at Easter, and shortly after, Totty—and her doll—had an excellent opportunity of learning what the title meant.

Shrimp Wiggle

BY EDNA KINGSLEY WALLACE

Mr. Morris Cutting extracted from his flat pocketbook a small card envelope on which was written "Miss J. Livingstone, 59 Irving Place." With an apprehensive glance at a blackening sky, he turned in, a moment later, at an unusually homelike, old-fashioned apartment-house, obviously a remodeled residence. An inspection of the card directory at the left of the door revealed the perplexing fact that Miss Jane Livingstone and Miss Gertrude Seymour lived on the second floor, left, while Miss Jessica Livingstone dwelt above them on the third floor.

"Two Miss J. Livingstones," mused Mr. Cutting. "The elderly spinster who gives music lessons must be Jane. Anyhow we'll try Jane first, though Jessica sounds enticing." Whereupon he climbed the rather dark stairway and rang at the apartment on the left.

The response to his ring was not immediate, for the good reason that Miss Jane Livingstone could hardly be stopped in the middle of a Bach Invention by anything short of a fire or a stroke of paralysis. As in this case she happened to be nearing the end, however, her response to Cutting's second ring was not too long delayed, and presently they were facing each other in the twilight of the doorway. Cutting found himself confronted by a slender girlish figure.

"Miss Livingstone?" he asked, hat in hand.

"Yes," she answered, "I am Miss Livingstone."

Now it was plainly apparent to Cutting that this charming young girl was not the lady of whom he was in search, but her sweet voice,

the dainty poise of her head, and a certain fascinating curl of her upper lip when she spoke, decided him to take chances in the furthering of their acquaintance. This damsel in the hand who could play Bach so well was worth several spinster ladies in the bush. Therefore he bowed, saying, "Miss Livingstone, I have here a card of introduction from Mr. John Gregory. My name is Morris Cutting." It must be confessed that he rather jumbled the name of Mr. John Gregory, fearing that this keen young person would discover the error and send him upstairs, forthwith.

Miss Livingstone's response was unexpectedly cordial. "Oh, Uncle John. I'm very glad to meet you, Mr. Cutting. Won't you come into the music-room?"

"Thank you," murmured Cutting, wickedly elated with the success of his toss-up. He had trusted to the words "card of introduction" to get him in, and behold, the name he had sought to make unrecognizable had proved open sesame.

"How is Uncle John?" asked Jane. "I haven't seen him since I came down here to live. I didn't suppose he knew where I was."

"He was very well day before yesterday," Cutting replied. "I lunched with him at his club." Then feeling that his call at half-after-eleven in the morning needed explanation, he plunged at once into the nature of his visit. "Amongst other things, Miss Livingstone, I asked your uncle whom he would recommend to me as a teacher of the piano. You see I sing, and am desirous of learning to play my own accompaniments somewhat better



DRAWN BY EDWARD JAN KRASA

"Two Miss J. Livingstones."

than I do at present. Do you think you could undertake to coach me?"

Cutting waited rather breathlessly for her reply. She would probably send him upstairs. But, on the other hand, she too might be a teacher of music. Her playing of Bach—well, it was a long shot, but worth while.

Jane surveyed the athletic six feet of him rather doubtfully. She had never taught a man—and such a very big man—before. However, she must get pupils, therefore she replied rather hesitatingly, "Why, I suppose so." What on earth had caused Uncle John to send him to her instead of to Cousin Jessica, who was so much older and more experienced?

Perhaps Mr. Cutting had made a mistake. "Are you sure," she said suddenly, "that you haven't made a mistake? Didn't my uncle send you to my cousin Miss Jessica Livingstone, on the next floor? Accompanying is quite her specialty."

"Oh, no indeed," answered Cutting with the emphasis of calm assurance. "It was certainly yourself of whom I was in search." Then, as if to make assurance doubly sure, "You are Miss Jane Livingstone, are you not?"

"Oh, yes," smiled Jane, quite willing to believe in her good fortune. She liked this decided young man with the laughing blue eyes and the voice like an organ tone.

"Well," said Cutting eagerly, "when can we begin? I think I should like three lessons a week, or if you can spare the time, one every day."

"That would hardly pay, I am afraid," replied Jane with a cool air of detachment, "unless you have a very great deal of time to practice. I should think three lessons a week would be quite enough, or even two."

"Just as you think best," said Cutting, a trifle dashed. "I am anxious to get on, you know, as fast as possible."

There was a little further talk of hours and terms, conducted by Jane with an amusingly businesslike air. When Cutting began to feel that he could not decently prolong his visit, Heaven intervened with the breaking of the threatened thunderstorm, and with quiet exultation Cutting accepted Jane's polite suggestion that he wait until it should be over. They drifted into very pleasant talk, desultory but animated.

"I should think studio life would be awfully jolly," Cutting was saying.

"It is nice enough when one is comfortable," returned Jane, "but that isn't always the case. For instance, our colored maid-of-all-work informed us casually last week that she was going to leave the next day to be married. Accordingly Miss Seymour and I are our own lady slaves, and do most of our cooking with three chafing-dishes and two afternoon teakettles—when we don't go out for meals."

"What jolly fun!" said Cutting enthusiastically. "I like chafing-dish messes, and I can make them, too. Do you like shrimp wiggle?"

"Shrimp what?" asked Jane interestedly.

"Shrimp wiggle," repeated Cutting. "It is like lobster *à la* Newburgh, a little, and there are peas in it, and it's—why, it's—"

"Just fine and dandy," suggested Jane, showing her dimples.

"Yes, it's great," added Cutting.

"Let me see," meditated Jane, "I have some peas, and some sherry—does it need sherry?"

"Yes, it does," he answered. Then, eagerly, "See here, Miss Livingstone, you don't want to go out in this rain to get your luncheon. Can't we make some shrimp wiggle here instead? I'll go out and get some shrimps and things—whatever is necessary. Please let me," he added anxiously, as he saw doubt and inclination struggling in Jane's too expressive face.

"Well," said that young lady, dallying with the temptation, "Miss Seymour—she's my accomplice here in the studio—will probably be in soon, and if she is wet and tired she will certainly want something hot and cheering. On the other hand it isn't raining so hard now, and therefore Aunt Emily may come after all; she was to have dropped in about twelve. You see, Aunt

Emily disapproves of our unchaperoned state down here, and comes in periodically to see what we are up to. I'm afraid—"

"Will Aunt Emily stay to lunch?" interrupted Cutting.

"No," answered Jane, "probably not. She has twelve or fifteen engagements a day, and one of them usually includes luncheon."

"Then that's all right," said Cutting easily, "I'll get the necessaries, and then sit in the lower hall until Aunt Emily goes out."

Jane laughed. "She may not even come in. And how would you know whether she were here or not, if she came while you were gone? Besides, she *might* stay."

"In that case you come down and rescue the supplies, while I could—would you send me away?" he asked coaxingly.

"That would be awfully ungrateful and inhospitable, wouldn't it? I don't know—Aunt Emily—"

A ring at the door caused them to exclaim again, in chorus, "Aunt Emily!"

Jane was perturbed. Aunt Emily would never allow this strange young man to outstay her. She might be relied upon to break almost any engagement for the sake of seeing that her niece was properly chaperoned under such circumstances. There was not much time for thought, especially with those blue eyes fixed upon her asking what she wished of their owner. Therefore she said hastily, "If you hear me call Aunt Emily by name, go back through these two rooms," indicating the two sleeping rooms, one behind the other, "and watch your chance to slip out. But you must be careful, for Aunt Emily might be sitting where she could see the front door. I trust your discretion. The truth is, if Aunt Emily

found you here, she would break any engagement and stay and chaperon me, and,"—this with a proud little tilt of the head—"Miss Seymour will soon be here, and it won't be necessary in the least."

Cutting nodded cheerfully—he was enjoying himself very much—and Jane went to the door.

"How do you do, Aunt Emily?" said Jane. "I'm so glad to see you. Did you get wet? Has it stopped raining? Come right in. Let me take your umbrella. Why, isn't it wet? Oh, yes, of course, it is a mere step to the door." Slowly she led the way to the music room, and as they entered she glanced about hastily. Yes, Mr. Cutting had disappeared.

"Won't you sit here, Aunt Emily?" said Jane, pushing forward an inviting armchair.

"No, thank you, my dear, I always like this sofa thing, whatever you call it; it just fits me," replied Aunt Emily, spreading her ample proportions over the seat in question. It commanded an unobstructed view of the front door.

"But, Auntie," ventured Jane shamelessly, "I'm afraid it isn't very strong—I should hate to have it break down with you."

Aunt Emily's face stiffened. "I'm not such an elephant as all that comes to," she snapped. "It seems to be bearing up fairly well under the strain." Then with returning good nature, "I have lost five pounds in the last three weeks, my dear—it is such a comfort!"

"That is nice," cooed Jane, "and how is your rheumatism?"

"Been dancing the Highland Fling in the calves of my legs," returned her aunt grimly, "and cavorting round in my shoulderblades—chastening 'em to get 'em ready for wings, I suppose."

Jane's strained ears heard something very like a snort from the back room, and she forthwith plunged into voluble expressions of sympathy, which, however, were cut short by Aunt Emily, who enquired crisply, "Well, are you able to pay your rent? How many pupils have you got?"

"Not very many," laughed Jane uneasily.

"How many?" reiterated her aunt.

Now Jane did not in the least mind telling Aunt Emily about her worldly affairs, but she did mind most particularly having that young man learn that he was as yet her only pupil. Therefore she said briskly, "Oh, I really can hardly say how many. Negotiations are pending with several, you know—they may or may not come to me."

"Humph!" sniffed Aunt Emily, "talk is cheap. Did you get that new bed-lounge arrangement for Gertrude's room?"

"Y-yes," hesitated Jane, miserably. Mr. Cutting was in Gertrude's room.

"I must go and see it," said Aunt Emily briskly.

"Why—er—I think the room is rather upset, Auntie. Gertrude wouldn't like you to see it that way, I'm afraid."

"Fiddlesticks!" exclaimed Aunt Emily.

At this juncture, to Jane's further distraction, the front door opened and Gertrude walked in. Jane sat rooted to her chair with horror of what might happen when Gertrude should enter her room. There was no time to reach and warn her. Before Jane could decide what to do, Gertrude had gone into her room, where, enthroned upon her trunk, which was covered with the usual studio device of a stray portière, sat a strange young man, grinning

SHRIMP WIGGLE

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DRAWN BY EDWARD JAN KRASA



"Go back through these two rooms and watch your chance to slip out."

broadly, his finger raised in warning, his lips shaped to a "Sh-h!"

Gertrude stopped blankly, her mouth half open in a bewilderment which foretold an exclamation if she were not stopped in time.

"Sh-h!" repeated Cutting in earnest pantomime. "Don't say a word," he said by means of lip motion, and gesturing with eloquent pantomime towards the music room.

"Who are you?" demanded Gertrude soundlessly.

"My name is Cutting," replied that young gentleman in a scarcely audible whisper. "I'm really a very nice person," he continued, "though appearances may be against me."

"But what are you doing here in my room?" persisted Gertrude. "What is up?"

"Little as you might think it," answered Cutting solemnly, "I'm observing the proprieties."

By this time Jane had determined to see what was happening in the little room down the hall, and had almost reached the door when the front door bell rang. When she opened the door, there stood Jack Hunter, beaming with pleasure.

"Hello, Janie!" said he joyfully, "I've got some mushrooms here, and I'm going to cook 'em and help you eat 'em up for lunch. Little Seymour home?"

"Yes," answered Jane in lifeless accents, "Come in," she added resignedly, "and meet Aunt Emily."

"Phew!" whistled Hunter softly, "what's doing?"

"And mind you," said Jane, thinking quickly, "you were expected to luncheon to-day, with some other people. Don't say a word, but follow my cues if you have wit enough."

"The deuce!" murmured Hunter admiringly. "Hurrah for you,

Janie! I'm game every time. I'll try to mind my p's and your q's."

Mr. Hunter having been duly presented to Aunt Emily, Jane said to that lady, "Auntie, you are going to stay to luncheon with us, aren't you? It is going to be a very informal chafing-dish affair, but we should like to have you. Mrs. Fulton Brown is coming—that is—er—I'm depending on her, but she may not be able to come. I—"

"I shall be delighted," replied Aunt Emily, pleasantly.

Whereupon Jane murmured with suspicious effusiveness, "I'm *so* glad," and slipped down the hall to Gertrude's room.

Jack Hunter's arrival had made it necessary to give this strangely impromptu affair an air of premeditation. And since Mr. Cutting must be smuggled out by some means or other in order that he might make a proper entrance, he might as well be utilized to procure the necessary supplies. Jane entered Gertrude's room with grim resolution in every line of her face, and turning to Gertrude, said, "I suppose you and Mr. Cutting have become acquainted in some fashion or other?"

"I don't believe he knows my name, but he told me his. You might introduce us," answered Gertrude.

Chuckling softly, Jane complied, and then said, "Mr. Cutting, are you willing to see me through this thing, no matter what I ask of you?"

With his hand on his heart Cutting replied heroically that she might command him to the death.

"Then here is my scheme," she continued. "It is manifestly impossible for you to appear now without coming in through the front door. You cannot come in without having gone out. The front door being impossible—Aunt Emily weighs two

hundred, plus, and likes that divan—I can see no means of exit for you except the dumb-waiter."

There were two sibilant explosions of mirth from Gertrude and Cutting, but Jane was growing serious again. "You see, Aunt Emily is going to stay to luncheon, and it would never do to have it seem like a surprise party. Therefore, Mr. Cutting, I am going to ask you to stop in at the Blenheim in Seventeenth Street, and tell Mrs. Fulton Brown that she must drop everything and come over here to luncheon as if she had had the engagement for a week. And we need a lot of things that you can get over in Third Avenue. You would better make a list, perhaps."

Dutifully and with exquisite enjoyment Cutting produced his notebook and pencil.

"One loaf of French bread," began Jane.

"We need butter, too," interjected Gertrude.

Jane nodded. "Two pounds of butter, a bottle of cream, enough shrimps for your wiggle, six individual charlottes, and get the alcohol bottle refilled. Do you think you can manage all that?"

"If I can't I'll hire a strong boy," returned Cutting cheerfully.

"Gertrude," said Jane, "we must get the table ready. Jack is entertaining Aunt Emily."

"You will hate me," murmured Cutting to Jane, unhappily, "for making so much trouble."

"No, I sha'n't," said Jane with a twinkle, "it is simply a combination of circumstances, of which you are only one. But I am depending on you to see me through artistically. It is a good thing the dumb-waiter runs on steel cables."

"Glad to hear that. I was fearing a possible catastrophe that might give the whole thing away."

"Did you think I would let you do it if it were dangerous?" protested Jane, flushing. "And you were going to do it anyway?"

"Why, of course," answered Cutting simply. "There wouldn't be anything else to do."

"Well," said Jane with a grateful look straight into Cutting's eyes, "all I will ask of that dumb-waiter is that it support you as well as you are supporting me in time of need."

"I am obviously your company," chuckled Cutting, "and a leading lady so resourceful as yourself certainly deserves the best support her company can give her. On, on to the dumb-waiter. At least it will never babble our secrets."

Stealthily the trio proceeded to the kitchen. Cutting concealed as best he might his consternation at sight of the cramped quarters at his disposal in the dumb-waiter, and wondered with all his might what he could do with his long legs. As Jane looked at the cage and then at Cutting her heart misgave her.

"It can't be done," she said decisively. "What shall we do?"

"It can and shall be done," rejoined Cutting firmly. "We'll find a way."

As they stood pondering there was heard coming nearer and nearer the voice of Aunt Emily saying to Hunter, "Let us see what those girls are doing. I want to see how they keep house."

The trio of conspirators looked at each other in wordless dismay. Then Cutting put one foot on top of the cage and swung himself up to a standing position. "Good-bye," he whispered gaily, "I'm off."

"Oh, please be careful," breathed Jane in an agonized whisper. "If anything should happen—"

As Cutting's head descended out of sight the kitchen door opened to

admit Aunt Emily. Hunter stood behind her grimacing unintelligibly.

"How do you do, Gertrude?" said Aunt Emily pleasantly. Then suspiciously, "What are you two staring at?"

"Why—er—" stammered Jane, "the dumb-waiter isn't working very well. We are sending down some—some empty milk bottles, and we are afraid they will get broken." Boldly she called down the shaft, "Are the bottles all right?"

"Yis, mum," came the answer, "wan of them like to have had its neck broken, mum, but it's all right now. It's funny about milk bottles—they're onstiddy whin they're empty 'stid of whin they're full."

Gertrude's shoulders shook at this cipher message, but Jane dared not venture so much as a smile—Aunt Emily's keen eyes were upon her.

"Our groceries haven't come *yet*," observed Jane with convincing if histrionic indignation. "They surely must come soon. Come, Gertrude, we must get the table ready. Please, Aunt Emily, you are to go back and let Mr. Hunter entertain you until we are ready." To the latter she said in a vigorous aside, "If you don't entertain Aunt Emily for all you are worth I'll never forgive you."

"What's the row?" murmured that gentleman. "Can't you let me in?"

"Not now—all in good time," replied Jane firmly.

The amiable Hunter successfully steered Aunt Emily back to her favorite seat, and preparations in the dining room proceeded with expedition.

In the course of fifteen minutes the supplies were loaded into the dumb-waiter by the faithful Cutting, and duly raised to the proper level.

"Is everything all right?" called Jane.

"Yes," replied the squire of damsels, "what am I to do now? Come up the front way?"

"Yes," answered Jane, "it is quite time you were arriving for one o'clock luncheon."

In a few moments the bell rang, and Jane nerved herself to her part. She was growing a little hysterical. She could hardly see how it had all happened. Of all the crazy escapades with a strange young man, surely this was the superlative. And not the least singular thing about it was that she felt as if she had known him all her life. She opened the door.

"How do you do, Miss Livingstone?" said Cutting. "I hope I'm not very late—I was detained by unforeseen circumstances."

Jane was almost inarticulate with suppressed laughter, but managed to say, "You are just in good time, and we are very glad to see you."

"It seems as if I hadn't seen you in an age. Lots of things have happened." He was hanging up his hat and coat.

By this time Jane was all but speechless, but managed to gasp in an undertone, "If you don't stop piling it on, I sha'n't be able to introduce you properly. You *must* behave. You have done beautifully so far. Don't spoil it by upsetting me completely."

"Well, it is nice—I like it," said Cutting seriously. "I have always had an ambition to star in a vaudeville sketch, and this is the nearest I've ever come to it."

"Hush," warned Jane, "come in and be sensible. Is Mrs. Brown coming?"

"Mrs. Brown's beautiful blue-eyed babe has the stomach-ache, or some new teeth or something," replied Cutting, carefully explanatory, "and your message had no effect whatever



DRAWN BY EDWARD JAN KRASA

"I like this sofa thing. It just fits me."

upon her. She said she really couldn't, and would you please excuse her, and she would try to see you this evening."

"Oh, dear!" moaned Jane. "Shall I have to lie again?"

"Why, no," suggested Cutting, "I'll simply give you an artistic version of the message in the presence of the passenger. That will merely imply that you really expected Mrs. Brown. And anyhow you did expect her—for a few minutes."

"Thus am I fortified in iniquity,"

murmured Jane. "Come, we must go in now."

After introductions Jane flew to Gertrude's further assistance. A few minutes later all was ready, and Aunt Emily was ceremoniously conducted to the banquet room. Hunter and Cutting vied with each other in attentions to the pleased lady, until she vowed that, properly chaperoned, of course, studio life was delightful.

It was all very informal. As a preliminary to his mushroom concoction Hunter retired to the kitchen

to make toast on the gas range. For this operation he squatted contentedly on the floor. When he returned he found Gertrude creaming potatoes, and Cutting stirring into his shrimp wiggle the sherry being poured by Jane. Everybody was busy and everybody talked at once. Everything was delicious, and Jane's coffee finally left them in that happy frame of mind which knows no need of further comfort.

When about two o'clock the bell rang and Jane started to go, Cutting murmured, "Last act. That bell is bewitched to-day."

And so indeed he thought when it dawned upon him that the cheery voice floating down the hall was none other than that of Mr. John Gregory.

"The deuce!" he groaned inwardly, "my goose is cooked. Why did he have to turn up here to-day?"

"Won't you all come into the music room?" called Jane. And they went.

As Cutting loomed upon Uncle John Gregory's view, that gentleman's face presented a study in bewilderment.

"Hello, Cutting," said he, "you sly young dog—you never told me you knew little Janie here, when I sent you to Cousin Jessica. I dropped in to-day to ask Jessica whether you had been to see her, and she said not. I hadn't heard till to-day that Janie had set up house-keeping on her own account. Thought I would run in and see how she did it." He turned to Jane banteringly.

She made no reply, but turned to Cutting to see what he was going to do about it. He had known—

"I say, Mr. Gregory," said Cutting, with the boldness of desperation. "I have deep, dark secrets to

tell you. You sit down here by me and I'll tell you things."

The things he told Uncle John must have been interesting, for that gentleman, from chuckling softly at the beginning of the narrative, fell to roaring with laughter, and wiped his eyes repeatedly.

Jane sat immovable, with stony indifference to the talk about her. He had known his mistake and had persisted in it. He had taken advantage of her belief that he was at least properly introduced. He would go away and tell the story as a good joke. She fought back the tears with difficulty. When Uncle John came to chat a little with her before carrying off Aunt Emily in his automobile, it was fortunate that he was so preoccupied with his late enjoyment of an uncommonly good story that he failed to perceive Jane's abstraction and rather irrelevant replies.

After they had gone, and Gertrude and Hunter had also gone out together, Jane turned to Cutting expectantly. He must apologize, and then go away.

"Miss Livingstone," he began, very seriously, "I owe you the most humble apology for the trouble I have caused you—" He paused uncertainly.

"That is nothing," replied Jane stiffly, "but you have put me in a very singular position. You must have known at once that I was not the Miss Livingstone you wanted."

"That is open to debate," rejoined Cutting, with a rather peculiar expression, "though I will admit that it was your cousin to whom Mr. Gregory was introducing me. But," with growing earnestness, "before I rang I did not know which it might be, inasmuch as the address was simply Miss J. Livingstone. How



DRAWN BY EDWARD JAN KRASA

"But what are you doing here in my room?"

could I tell whether J. meant Jane or Jessica?"

"Well, you very soon learned the difference," observed Jane icily.

"And the only thing for you to do now is to go upstairs and make arrangements with my cousin."

"I don't see that at all," persisted

Cutting. "You recommended yourself to me, quite impartially, by your playing of Bach. I want to study with you."

"Oh, that is quite impossible, now," she answered with an appalling air of finality.

"But why?" asked Cutting impatiently.

"I could not possibly take a pupil away from Cousin Jessica. It wouldn't be honorable."

"Honorable fiddlesticks! I've never even seen her. I beg your pardon, but you are really too absurd."

"And there are other reasons," pursued Jane inexorably.

"Very well," said Cutting stiffly, rising as he spoke. "I must thank you for your hospitality, and for your forbearance. I know I must seem to you to be a brute. I am very, very sorry. It is a horrid mess. I am—I am very miserable about it," he burst out. "It was such a temptation—can't you forgive me?"

"That is hardly necessary," said Jane. "It is all over now. I think perhaps enough has been said."

Searchingly he looked at her, hoping vainly that her face would soften into its native humor and friendliness.

"Then good-bye," he said, "at least I may come to see you sometime?"

"Since our acquaintance was begun on false pretenses," she answered, "I see no reason why it should continue. Besides," she added, "I am rarely so much at leisure as you have found me to-day."

A ghost of a smile flitted across Cutting's mouth. He had seen more leisurely people than Jane had been to-day. She bit her lip with vexation at her slip, and an irrepressible

gleam appeared in her eyes at the humor of it.

This the acute Cutting perceived, and knowing well that it was difficult for anger to survive a laugh, he pursued his advantage, saying, "At least you will not deny me the privilege of making a party call. It is my invariable rule to make party calls. I always regard it as due to myself as well as my hostess. You would not force me into a courtesy?"

Jane dimpled involuntarily, but recovering herself quickly, became graver than ever, and said with some severity, "Your flippancy is hardly in taste, Mr. Cutting."

Refusing to recognize her implied prohibition, he said, "Then that is settled. I shall try my luck very soon. Good-bye—and try to forgive me."

"Good-bye, Mr. Cutting."

When he had gone Jane relaxed her spirit in a very luxury of woe. By which it is meant that she cried very hard indeed, curled up in a miserable heap amongst the pillows on the big divan.

"How could he let me let him stay?" she wailed. "I was idiotic. Shall I never learn the foolishness of yielding to my crazy impulses?" Then she continued argumentatively, "I don't care—he was thoroughbred about the dumb-waiter. Good Heavens!" with horror, "I never paid him for all those things. What *will* he think of me?" She laughed hysterically until she wept afresh. "I don't even know his address," she groaned. "What shall I do?"

The bell rang. Since there was no one else to go, she frantically dabbed some powder on her nose, donned her eyeglasses to conceal her reddened lids, and went to the door. There stood Mr. Morris Cut-

ting with a huge florist's box under his arm.

He had not expected the welcome he received. "Oh, Mr. Cutting, I'm so glad to see you—I forgot to pay you for all those things this morning. I didn't know what you would think of me. How much were they?"

"Oh, Lord!" he groaned, "I don't know, I'm sure. I didn't notice. May I come in?—I—you see—I thought I would make my party call—I was so awfully sorry—unhappy—about it all. I just had to come back. I am afraid you think I am an awful cad, and I can't stand that. I hope you like these dark red roses," he added simply, handing her the box.

They had reached the music room by this time, and though Jane instinctively sat down with her back to the light, Cutting's keen eyes perceived at once that she had been crying.

"See here," he began, "please don't be so cut up over this thing. Nobody knows *all* about it except ourselves, and we sha'n't tell."

Jane's lip trembled, and though she winked very hard to prevent it two tears rolled down her cheeks. Cutting gripped the arms of his chair.

"I don't know," choked Jane, "what you can think of me. It was all so unconventional, and undignified, and untruthful and—and—" she finished with a watery gleam of a smile, "*every* thing that was *un*!"

"I know what I think of you," said Cutting, rising so suddenly that he almost upset his chair. "I think you are great—you are the finest girl I ever knew. I think—why, hang it, I don't have to think—I know just by feeling that I love you. Janie, child, don't hide your face. Let me see your eyes. I must have

begun to love you the moment you opened the front door this morning. I couldn't help it. I couldn't help doing what I did. Janie, dear, it was meant to happen. You said it was not you I wanted. It was. I want you more than I ever dreamed I could want anything in this world. Janie, look at me."

In truth she was frightened by his vehemence, his masterfulness. "But you don't know me at all," she breathed, "how can you?"

"Don't know you!" echoed Cutting incredulously, "I've had unusual advantages for knowing you. I'll wager I know you better this minute than—well, say Hunter."

"Oh, Jack doesn't know me at all," agreed Jane, "but—"

"And Janie, dear," said Cutting with a new softness in his voice, "of course I know there are some things in you that I don't know yet, but I shall love them when I do. Won't you let me? I know it isn't to be expected that you should care so quickly—but let me try to make you. I'm not much of a chap, I'm afraid,"—this very humbly—"but I mean to be."

Timidly Jane looked up at this impetuous wooer bending over her. And when she met his eyes, so tender, so compelling, it was all up with Jane. She buried her hot face in his coat.

"It is perfectly awful," she sighed, "it is scandalous. We mustn't tell anybody for ever so long, but I do—that is, I can't help it—I believe I am going to fall in love with you—I can't seem to help it."

"You will marry me—when?" he asked, breathlessly.

"Oh, Heavens!" answered Jane, startled, "not for years!"

But Cutting only smiled over the top of her head.

Cavalleria Montaniana

BY EDWARD BRECK

The Honorable William Greywood, or Colonel Bill, as he was known throughout the Northwest, stroked his thick, iron-gray hair with one hand while in the other he held a visiting card, which, in that mighty fist, seemed scarcely more than a high-light. Scorning to wear glasses at sixty-two, the Colonel held the bit of pasteboard off at arm's length and read, in his naturally rich but high-pitched voice, "'Earl of Greywood.' Who's that, Anse? You know all these high-muckymucks."

"Very few, sir, but I remember this one, and I should think you ought to, too. Isn't he one of the vice-presidents of the 'London and Montana'?"

"Hm, yes, I guess he is. Wonder what he wants. Well, show him up, sonny." The page vanished. "After some inside information, I suppose. Think we're all swindlers over here. Got a cigar, Anse? The old boy'll want one too, likely."

Anson, built on his handsome father's lines, though less rugged of feature and, as became a Harvard man, better groomed, handed the Colonel his open cigar-case, from which the one-time commander of the 20th Michigan extracted a weed. As he was in the act of lighting it the door opened, and a tall, thin, irreproachably dressed gentleman of about the Colonel's age appeared. He stooped slightly and on the whole was not at all of the "Roast-beef - of - Old - England" type. In manner he was distant and bored.

The Colonel made for him and grasped his long, thin fingers in his own muscular paw.

"How are you? Glad to see you!

Sit down! Smoke? Here, Anse, give Mr.—eh—Greywood a cigar. My son Anson, sir. Sit right here!" And the Colonel pushed the Earl with benevolent violence into the most comfortable chair in the apartment.

Anson extended his hand, which, however, the Englishman seemed not to see.

"I'm glad to see you again, Lord Greywood," said the young man. "You may remember talking with me about Devonshire families the other night at the Embassy." The Earl put up his eyeglass and gave Anson a cold stare.

"Aw—yes, I recall the incident. Aw—very odd—knowing so much about English families—foreigner—from the States, you know, eh?"

"No doubt it seems so to you, but I've bussed myself a good deal with English history. In fact, I'm over here now looking up *Americana* for one of our public libraries."

"Aw—very extraordinary, 'm sure! I rather fancied you were—eh—a kind of — aw — business man, you know."

This brought a leonine roar from the Colonel. "Hohoho! Lord bless your soul, I tried hard enough to make a business man out of him, but he simply ain't got brains enough. I make him do the secretary act over here, though, when he ain't lookin' for trouble, stirrin' up microbes over't the British Museum."

"Aw!" remarked the Earl dubiously.

"Say, it's funny we've both got the same name, ain't it?" asked the Colonel by way of conversation.

"Hm—aw—yes, very extraordinary; I—aw—in fact it was concern-

ing that very extraordinary—aw—coincidence that I was desirous of conferring with you."

"That so?" said the Colonel.

The Earl winced slightly, as if his word had been doubted, though it may have been his sense of rhetoric that was shocked. However, he recovered himself and resumed.

"Hm—yes, aw—I entertained hopes that you would be able to regard the matter somewhat from my own standpoint. Aw—a man of position—aw—in point of fact an English noble, his name is—aw—a thing sacred, you know, and—aw—that sort of thing. Deuced awkward, you know, foreigner—American—same name—here in London and interested in same commercial company. Why, good gad, the other night at the Carlton"—here the Earl's voice really showed feeble symptoms of excitement—"the Duke of Southumberland actually asked me—why, do you know, he asked me whether we were relatives!"

"Hoho! Haha!" roared the Colonel. "Great! That rags the bun! Say, what'd you tell him?"

The Earl looked much annoyed. "I told him, of course, that we were not related in the remotest degree; that you were in fact—aw—born in the States. I believe that is correct?"

"Right you are, me and my father and grandfather before me, I guess."

"Well, do you know, the Duke wouldn't believe me. He read your name in the Copper Company's prospectus as 'The Honourable William Greywood,' and he asked me, quite pertinently, 'm sure, how you could be 'honourable' unless you were—aw—a member of my family."

The Colonel leaned back in his chair and stared. Then the ruddy tinge in his face grew a shade darker.

"Well, I'm cussed!" he exclaimed.

"Is all the honor in the world cinched by your family?"

"Lord Greywood refers only to the courtesy title of 'honourable,' sir, and not to any trait of character," broke in Anson.

"Quite so, of course," assented the Earl, who perceived the American's annoyance without fully comprehending its cause. "The title 'honourable,' you may not be aware, belongs solely to the children of Earls, Viscounts and Barons of this realm, and—aw—naturally, when the Duke saw the title before your name, he—aw—took for granted that you were—aw—a Greywood of Devonshire, you know."

"Well, what's the odds if he did?" snapped the Colonel, thoroughly irritated by the manner of his namesake. "I never stuck any 'honourable' onto my name. It's a d—d, idiotic piece of nonsense they hang onto you in my country when you've been so unfortunate as to belong to the legislature or otherwise make some kind of an official fool of yourself. I don't want it! As old Artemus Ward said, I perfectly disgust it! You may have it! I hereby confer it exclusively on the Greywoods of Devonshire! See?" And the Colonel struck a match viciously and applied it to the end of his cigar, a wholly unnecessary proceeding. The Earl missed the point of the explanation but comprehended in a general way the renunciation of the much-discussed title.

"Aw—thanks," he drawled. "Very good of you, I'm sure. And this—aw—very reasonable manner of viewing the matter emboldens me to make still another request in regard to a subject closely—aw—allied with the preceding one."

"Well, spit it out!" growled Colonel Bill, his sense of humor once more getting the better of his

irritation. Anything to oblige a Greywood of Devonshire," he added, with an exaggerated wink at his son, who was thoroughly enjoying the scene but hoped that his father would remain on the side, not only of right, but of courtesy. The Earl resumed.

"Hm, I—aw—have once or twice noticed a ring on your finger of a very peculiar nature, in fact a sealing-ring with the arms of the Greywoods of Devonshire—"

The Colonel half started from his chair and was on the point of consigning the Greywoods of Devonshire to the hottest place known to old-fashioned theology, when, to his son's relief, he mastered his annoyance and settled back with a grin. "Well, then," he said, "I guess we're all from Devonshire."

"I beg your pardon?" queried the Earl.

"What's that?" asked Colonel Bill.

"I was—aw—on the point of saying," resumed Lord Greywood, "that I would very much like to come into possession of that ring, to—aw—purchase it, and, as I presume that you picked it up in some bric-à-brac shop and attach no particular value—"

"Bric-à-brac shop!" roared the Colonel. "Never went into one in my life. That ring, sir, I'd have you know, belonged to my father, and he put it on my finger as he lay with a minié-ball through both lungs on the bloody field of Shiloh! And what's more, there ain't money enough in the Bank of England, no, nor in your whole cussed little island, to buy it, and don't you forget it!"

He suddenly pulled himself together and modified his voice. "You'll have to excuse me," he went on. "The fact is I ain't much on jewelry and I don't care a tinker's

darn for family, but you'll understand that I consider this ring as a sort of a piece o' myself, so to speak, and there ain't any one can have it as long as I'm alive. When I pass in my checks it'll go to Anse here."

The Earl had been staring at the American in a state of semi-comprehension, but he did gather that the seal-ring of the Greywoods of Devonshire was not to be had, and therefore passed on to the next subject that weighed upon his soul.

"Hm," he began, "of course, under the very extraordinary circumstances, although I, as you can perhaps—aw—appreciate, very unwillingly allow a ring originally belonging to the Grey—however, let that pass. Hm—aw—there is one other topic upon which I feel it my duty to confer with you, a very serious and delicate subject indeed. I trust that I shall be able to bring you to view it in the light in which it appears to me. I refer to my only son and heir, the Honourable Willoughby Greywood."

"A very worthy young man, without doubt," replied the Colonel, infinitely bored, "but what in thunder have I got to do with him?"

"My son is heir to one of the proudest titles in England. He will in good time be the fourteenth Earl of Greywood. You will readily comprehend my solicitude in regard to his future."

"All right, all right, but where do I get into the game?" queried the Colonel with rather rude impatience.

"Well—hm—to come to the point, I had already selected as his future consort a young lady whom every one must consider to be a most suitable *partie*, the daughter of one of our most distinguished noble houses, and you may judge of my—aw—displeasure upon being made the unwilling

ing observer of—aw—most marked attentions paid by my son to a young lady who, I have no doubt, is a very worthy young person so far as her character is concerned, but who is—aw—hardly my son's equal in—aw—social station. I refer to Miss Greywood, your daughter."

This time the Colonel was up for good. At first he took a few furious strides up and down the room, and then, planting himself squarely in front of the Englishman, he burst forth.

"See here, Mister Lord, I've listened to your champion A.1. guff about as long as I intend to. I didn't mind your hifalutin' about titles and the Greywoods of Devonshire; but I want you to understand that we Yankees are a little touchy about our women folks and you'd better steer clear o' that subject, see? And just by way o' closin' on it up I'll only remark that my Bess is a blamed sight too good for any English softhead that ever lived!"

The Earl, who had also risen, winked and blinked in confusion.

"Very sorry to have offended you," he stammered. "I expressly said that the young lady was a very worthy

"No apologies necessary," broke in the Colonel. "Just drop the subject and drop it quick!"

"I will do so with pleasure," answered the Earl, whose thin blood was also rising in temperature, "but I wish to state positively that I will never give my consent to my son's marriage with your daughter!"

"Your statements don't interest me!" yelled the Colonel. "Good afternoon!" And he turned on his heel. The Earl did not give himself the trouble even to repeat the conventional phrase, but made a



DRAWN BY GUSTAVUS C. WIDNEY

"I am going to show you something 'very extrawndinary.'" See page 192

precipitate exit in high dudgeon.

As soon as he was gone Colonel Bill turned to his son, who had been the *tertius gaudens* throughout the entire scene, and exclaimed:

"Say, Anse, wouldn't that simply

jar you? That blamed old jackass havin' the immortal nerve to say our Bess wasn't good enough for his doughhead of a son—*our Bess!* Jerushy Smithers! I'll make him pay for that yet and dearly!" And the indignant old fellow mopped his perspiring countenance energetically.

Anson, keeping his face straight with some effort, queried:

"Would you really like to, sir?"

"Like to! Well, you just bet!"

Anson thought a moment and then left the room, returning in a minute with a kind of strong box, which he placed upon the center-table.

"I am going to show you something 'very extrawndiary,' as our friend, the Earl, would say," he began, as he leisurely unlocked and raised the lid of the iron box. "You remember last week I went down to Blessington Abbey, Sir John Archebald's place in Devonshire, where there was said to be a lot of old, unedited correspondence that had somehow eluded Stevens and other American antiquaries. Well, I found the old library a perfect mine—" At the word "mine" the Colonel pricked up his ears—"for the manuscript - hunter." The Colonel's face fell. "There wasn't much American stuff," proceeded Anson, "but what I did unearth was meaty, I can tell you. It was that," and he tossed a big yellow bundle of parchment onto the table.

The Colonel stopped and read: "'Papers Concerning Greywood Succession.' Well, what about it?"

Anson took up the bundle, undid it, and extracted three or four ancient letters which he handed over the table; but his father waved them back. "What's it all about, Anse? I can't read that mouldy stuff. Jest out with the story if it's wuth hearin', and be spry about it; for

I've got to meet Crocker at six."

"Don't be in a hurry, sir. It'll interest you, never fear. Just put on another weed and listen carefully. After studying the contents of this bundle pretty thoroughly I ventured to ask Sir John's permission to take them with me to London for the purpose of having *facsimiles* of the different documents made. He's the horsy sort of country squire, you know, utterly unappreciative of the treasures he's got in his library, and his answer was, 'Take 'em to Timbuctoo, if you like.' So I brought them along and have been spending the week verifying certain statements contained in them, with the help of the British Museum.

"What I found to be pretty well substantiated is, in a few words, this: In the year 1724 the eighth Earl of Greywood married the eldest and favorite daughter of his neighbor, Sir Hugh Archebald, Baronet, the owner of Blessington Abbey, and the sole issue of this union was one son, Willoughby Greywood, who was born in 1725 and had the misfortune to lose his mother in infancy. His father married again, and by his second wife, who seems to have been the kind of cruel stepmother we read about in the old romances, had several sons and daughters. This appears from a letter, contained in this collection, written by young Willoughby Greywood to Sir Hugh Archebald from 'Dorchester in New-England' and dated 1745, which begins, 'Deare and Honoured Uncle,' and is evidently an answer to a letter from Sir Hugh demanding an explanation why the young man left England. The letter, which is rather confusedly written and full of high-flown sentiments, complains of his treatment by his father, Lord Greywood, as well as by his stepmother and her children, and proudly

declares that he 'will never again darken the portal of Greywood Halle until such tyme as full atonemente shal be made me for actes of oppression and greate injustice.'

"The young emigrant's second letter, written ten years later and also addressed to Sir Hugh, who, however, had died in the meantime, protests to his uncle against the succession to the Greywood peerage of his half-brother, Mervyn, and requests that steps be taken to prevent the estates from falling into usurping hands. He writes that he has forwarded letters of protest to his half-brother and to His Majesty's Government, and that he is about to leave his wife and infant son in New England for a time, as he has joined the forces under Maj.-General Johnson, who is to proceed against the French and their Indian allies in the northern part of the colony of New York.

"And now comes a letter to Sir John Archebald, the son of Sir Hugh, written in the year 1760 by the town-clerk of Bennington, Vermont, stating, evidently in answer to a request from Sir John, that he, the town-clerk, 'must with great payne inform Yr. Excll. yt Willowby Greywood has lost hys lyfe in a grievous battel with ye Frenche and ye savages at ye southern ende of Lake George,' and that the widow had married again and removed with her infant son and her new husband to the westward, the clerk knew not whither, but probably to the settlements along the Hudson River or even further into the wilderness. The birth-certificate of the infant, born in 1754 and baptized, like his father, Willoughby, was enclosed in this letter from the old town-clerk and is here intact, as you see, and, what is just as important, a copy of the marriage certificate of the emigrant father.

"And now, sir, comes a statement contained in this same letter that will interest you. The clerk writes to Sir John Archebald that a handsome ring with a fine green stone upon which was engraved a coat-of-arms containing three hawks, or eagles, with a fourth as a crest, remained in the possession of the widow, whose husband's name was Sulloway."

The Colonel suddenly "sat up and took notice." "Well, I'm darned!" he blurted out; for he had often heard his grandfather quote the droll sayings of *his* "Gran'ma Sulloway," who had evidently been a person reputed for her quaint wit. Then the seal-ring—the whole business utterly flabbergasted the Colonel.

"What do you make out of it, Anse?" he asked.

"Well, sir, as far as I've got in verifying the documents, and without an intimate knowledge of the law in the case, it's perfectly clear to me that you are no less a personage than the rightful Earl of Greywood and the owner of Greywood Hall!"

Colonel Bill rose slowly, stuck his hands into his pockets, and whistled a low, long-drawn-out note. Then, throwing his head back, he let out a laugh that was a combination of a roar and an Apache war-yell. His son regarded him with a broad grin, that, however, soon became audible, so contagious was his father's full-bodied mirth.

"Hohoho! Haha! Say, Anse," the Colonel gasped, "that's good for a bottle, hey? Gosh almighty, what would Jake Billin's say to that? Hohoho! Say, jest telephone old step-an'-fetch-it to send round that coronet as soon as ever he likes! Hohoho—whoop!" And the Colonel threw his stalwart frame into an armchair, where he sprawled, pant-

ing for breath. "Say, Anse," he panted, "you tell Bess she'd better not have any more to do with that young Greywood; he belongs to the younger branch and ain't hardly in our set! Hohohahaha!"

"Well, sir, if you really care enough about it to let me retain Trevelyan, the big K.C., we can easily find out whether you have any valid claim. He's a regular fiend at that sort of thing, you know. I don't suppose you really care much about either the title or the estates. I presume, sir, that you're pretty fairly well off already, and—"

"Never you mind about all that, my lad. You jest go ahead and engage anybody you want. Prove your case, if it takes ten thousand, and leave the rest to me."

"But the publicity—"

"Mm—yes, that's so. Wouldn't do the Company much good, would it? Get all the highmuckymucks down on us. Well, jest go ahead as soft as you can and we'll see. We'll give his nibs a scare anyway. Say, Anse, that's the first decent assay you ever got out o' your book-learnin', I'm dummed if it ain't!"

Anson laughed quietly. "Good bluff, sir; but if it pleases you, all right; it doesn't hurt me."

"Me neither! Fire away; there's something in the bank yet." This was the Colonel's way of referring to his millions. "I always did think that ring had some meanin'," he mused.

"So did I," said Anson. "I've made a pretty thorough study of our genealogy in America, and, though I never found any connecting link before, I've kept my eyes peeled while mousing round over here."

Anson therefore retained the celebrated King's Counsel, Sir Lyon Trevelyan, who, after a superficial

examination of the case, pronounced it probably a good one, providing that the necessary American documents turned out to be extant and valid, which Anson was able to assure him was the fact. Sir Lyon hesitated somewhat about undertaking a legal campaign which, if successful, would result in ousting one of the richest and most influential English nobles, not only from the House of Lords, but from his vast estates; but it happened that Lord Greywood was personally very unsympathetic to him, and, furthermore, the fee promised to be fat enough to make even a King's Counsel's mouth water.

Anson's inquiries convinced the young American that the Earl was quite ignorant of any attempt on the part of his ancestor to usurp another's property and title. Both DeBrett and Burke made mention of an eldest son of the eighth Lord Greywood, but added only the equivocal information, "Died?" The later Earls were all called Willoughby, thus restoring the original, traditional baptismal name of the head of the house.

Anson gave himself the trouble to see something of young Greywood, the Earl's heir, and found him an excellent sort of fellow, entirely unlike his father, a fact amply explained by the Irish blood of his mother, one of the Butlers of Dungboyne. After graduating from Rugby and Cambridge he had gone to South Africa as lieutenant of a volunteer regiment, and made a good record for gallantry in the field, on one occasion getting a Boer Mauser bullet through his arm. On his return he was pushed into Parliament in a strictly Conservative borough in which his family possessed great influence, by the retirement of the aged baronet who had represented it

for many years. On the whole the Honourable Wiloughby Greywood, M.P., was a manly, good-natured and fairly intelligent young fellow, against whom it would be hard to say aught. Anson frankly liked him, and, although he was in general not an advocate of international marriages, he was not disposed to place any obstacles in the young Englishman's matrimonial paths, since he was aware that, as the young man was himself the heir to a fortune, it was for Bessie's own sake that he was paying her this supreme compliment. Anson was very fond indeed of his sister, and thought her the brightest, prettiest and most delightfully unconventional girl in the world. He would perhaps have preferred to see her married to a wide-awake American, but the more he saw of young Greywood the more he became reconciled to what he felt was becoming inevitable.

The old Earl, however, remained obdurate. His dignity had doubtless never suffered such a blow as that dealt it by the individual whom he called "that very extraordinary American person," and, although the luminosity of his intelligence had often been called in question, he



DRAWN BY GUSTAVUS C. WIDNEY

"The eminent K. C. B. crossed the threshold."

certainly possessed a goodly share of that fine old Anglo-Saxon virtue, stubbornness. His son's studied diplomacy and appeals to his sense of fair play and to parental affection were as barren of result as the expostulations which followed, and the young man, to whom an out-and-out break with his father was distasteful in the highest degree, but who, nevertheless, shared fully in the family characteristic already referred to, and who had for good and all set his heart upon making Miss Bessie Greywood of Butte, Montana, the future Countess of Greywood, found

himself in a desperate quandary.

Miss Bessie was staying with American friends who were temporarily residing in London, greatly to the disgust of her father, who could not be brought to perceive the necessity for a young girl in society to be under the protection of a married lady.

"I guess I can take care of her," he snarled, "as well as her sainted mother could if she was alive, and if she needed anybody to look after her, which ain't the case by a long shot."

But Bessie gave him what she called one of her bear-hugs and

tornado-kisses, and said she was having *such* a glorious time at Mrs. Brimmer's, and when one was in London one should do as the Londoners do.

"Well, why don't you drop your H's all over the floor then?" asked her father triumphantly.

"Oh, you silly old daddy!" exclaimed Bessie, giving him another hug. "Why, nice English people don't drop their H's!"

"That so?" asked the Colonel innocently.

Now Colonel Bill had always been full of outspoken contempt for the western *nouveau riche* who gathered up his millions and betook himself to New York, there to purchase an entry into the smart set; and he made no concealment of his disdain for society in general. On this account, although he was constitutionally averse to interfering in the love-affairs of his children, he would naturally have felt little sympathy with his daughter's choice of a husband, and might even have attempted, in a mild way, to reason with her on the subject. But this sentiment of dislike for kings and nobles and society frivolities of every kind was far outweighed by one of defiance, aroused by the opposition of Lord Greywood to his son's marriage projects, and Colonel Bill swore to himself that "no blatherin' old lobster like that should stand between his daughter and her happiness."

Nevertheless he went about the matter in his own way. Fearing that Anson's very evident liking for young Greywood would interfere with his "getting even" with the old Earl, he took the matter of the succession into his own hands and said no more to Anson about it. This was agreeable to the younger man, for he had begun to question

the taste, as well as the expediency, of following up so visionary a project, however sure the legal basis proved to be; and, as the Colonel made no further mention of the affair, he had reason to hope that it had lost its interest to a man of so practical a cast of mind as his father. Neither to his sister nor to young Greywood did Anson ever make even a jesting mention of the case.

Lord Greywood himself would gladly have washed his hands of the whole American invasion had he not been too deeply engaged in the new Anglo-American copper concern, of which he was also one of the figure-head vice-presidents. He therefore restricted himself to the most distant and frigid politeness upon the few occasions when the meetings of the company brought him face to face with Colonel Greywood. This manner of the Earl's seemed to amuse the American greatly, and he took a malicious pleasure in putting an extreme cordiality into his "Good mornin', Mr. Greywood! Ev'rything all right down in Devonshire?"

"Extraordinarily vulgar person!" said the Earl to his club cronies. "Fancy his having the right to call himself Greywood. Really, you know, there ought to be a law to protect the aristocracy. I was seriously thinking of introducing a bill in the Lords, but the Chancellor, with whom I spoke about the matter, made some vague objection, something about the spirit of the age and that kind of rot."

The Colonel called the whole British aristocracy, from dukes down, "Mr.," with rare exceptions, not at all from intended rudeness, but from sheer inability to accustom himself to the various gradations of rank that seemed to him silly to the last degree. Nevertheless he got on

capitally with every one with whom he came in contact, on account of his breezy good nature, and managed on the whole to amuse himself fairly well, with business and horse-racing, his sole sporting proclivity. In spite of this, however, he heartily wished himself back in Butte with his old cronies, most of whom, some with millions and some without, preferred a shirt-sleeve and "pants"-in-the-boots existence and looked upon a "swallertail" as an abomination of effete eastern civilization.

But the Colonel prided himself upon doing thoroughly whatever he put his hand to, and the affair of the Greywood peerage was no exception to this rule. By means of the data furnished by his son and by a secretary whom he sent to the United States, he found himself within two months in possession of the documents necessary to open the case. Not long afterwards, at the close of a committee meeting of the "London and Montana Copper Company," he formally asked leave of the Earl of Greywood to call on him at Greywood House or at the offices of the Earl's solicitors.

Lord Greywood looked vaguely into space and inquired, "Aw—could not the—aw—matter upon which you desire to—aw—consult me be mentioned here?"

"I guess nit," replied the Colonel. "Most important matter. You'll think so yourself when you hear it. And I'd have my lawyer along if I were you."

It was arranged that the interview should take place in the offices of Messrs. Merry and Thayer, the Earl's solicitors, both of whom were present with their client when Colonel Greywood appeared in what was called the confidential office. At his request Sir Lyon Trevelyan,

who accompanied him, as well as a clerk who carried a large portfolio, remained at first in the outer office.

"Howdy, gentlemen?" said the Colonel cheerily as he entered. "Glad to see you. I'd like to have a little powwow with you first, Mr.—eh—Lord Greywood." And, notwithstanding that all three gentlemen were standing, he threw himself into a large, leather-covered armchair and pulled out his cigar-case. The Earl looked bored and weary.

"Is it absolutely necessary?" he queried languidly.

"Well, I dunno, but I reckon it'll be pleasanter for you." The two solicitors retired and the Colonel offered his cigar-case to the Earl, who waved it away with awkward stiffness.

"Won't smoke? All right; don't mind me. I talk better when I smoke. Well (scratch!), I wanted to see you about a (puff!) very peculiar affair. (Puff-puff!) I ain't much on romances, but this reminds me some way o' that funny book Mark Twain wrote—you know Mark?—about a Yankee at the court of King Cole or King Somebody-else. (Puff-puff!) Well, come to think of it, there ain't really no use of any preamble. I jest called in to inform you that you ain't the real, bonafidy Earl of Greywood!"

Lord Greywood rose stiffly and haughtily. "Sir," he said in acid tones, "if you have come here to make me the victim of jests, the taste of which—"

"Jests!" broke in the Colonel. "This ain't no jest. I guess nit. Never was more serious in my life." And the Colonel puffed tranquilly at his Havana.

"Aw—and who, then, is the real Earl, as you put it?" asked Lord Greywood, superciliously.

"I am," replied the Colonel

serenely, blowing an enormous ring of smoke towards the chandelier. Lord Greywood retired a step in the direction of the door through which his legal advisers had vanished.

"I—aw—hardly know," he said hesitatingly, "how to take this very extraordinary conduct on your part. I think I would better summon my solicitors, from whom I have no secrets." And he placed his hand on the door-knob.

"Just as you like," observed the Copper King. "But I thought perhaps, if you took a reasonable view of the case, that we might compromise in some sort of a way and nobody need know—"

For an answer the Earl threw open the door and called in Messrs. Merry and Thayer. Indicating the Colonel with a slight nod, he said:

"Gentlemen, Mr.—aw—Greywood has come here to claim the Greywood peerage!" A meager smile of contempt barely changed his features as he spoke.

The two lawyers replied only with a stare, which, in the case of Mr. Merry, changed to a broad grin. "Very interesting!" he remarked in dry, crisp tones.

"Ain't it, though?" replied the Colonel. "Funny when you come to think of it, hahahaha!"

The Earl frowned. "I confess, sir, I cannot perceive the humorous side of the question, and in any case I—aw—must peremptorily decline to discuss it further."

"What's that? Won't discuss it? Why, man, you don't want it all over town, do you? I told you already I might not be disinclined to a reasonable compromise. Better have a look at the proofs I've brought along anyway."

Mr. Merry's face straightened. "You are prepared to furnish proofs?" he inquired.

"Sure!" The Colonel rose, opened the door leading to the outer offices, and called out, "Ask Sir Lyon to step this way."

Neither the Earl nor his two solicitors made the slightest effort to conceal their astonishment as the eminent K.C., accompanied by his clerk, crossed the threshold. The two lawyers recovered from their stupefaction in time to greet Sir Lyon with a cordiality not wholly unmixed with servility, while the Earl eyed him with suspicious alarm. Was it not this very expert in peerage cases who had ousted the Annesleys from the Symington marquise, utterly bamboozling the House of Lords by his persuasive eloquence?

As soon as everybody was seated Mr. Merry addressed Sir Lyon Trevelyan. "Your presence in this case, Sir Lyon, gives it, we must confess, a—eh—a seriousness which we were hardly prepared to concede to it. Mr. Greywood spoke of certain—eh—proofs. May I inquire whether you have personally examined these so-called—eh—proofs?"

"I have done so very thoroughly."

"And, in your candid opinion, is there a case against our honored client, the Earl of Greywood?"

"Without any doubt. Of course the House of Lords, as you are perfectly well aware, is of a decidedly subjective nature. I am far from declaring that I consider it an absolute certainty that my client could win his case, but I consider it the strongest I have ever interested myself in. If you will give yourselves the trouble to examine these copies I have brought for your inspection—"

The lawyers exhibited nothing less than consternation, but the Earl became indignant.



DRAWN BY GUSTAVUS C. WIDNEY

"The Earl drew himself up, while the red blood mantled his thin cheeks."

See page 201

"We shall not waste our time examining any papers! My father, grandfather and great-grandfather before me sat in the Upper House as Earls of Greywood!" he exclaimed, heroically paraphrasing Henry the Sixth.

Sir Lyon looked serious. "Hm—you will not forget the case of Dunton versus Annesley in the Symington peerage, Lord Greywood."

The Earl glared. He remembered it all too well. The legal wizard before him made and unmade peers as easily as the great Warwick did kings. Colonel Bill, who was enjoying the distress of his rival "ten thousand worth," as he put it, now rose.

"Well, gentlemen," he said, "I guess you won't need me any longer. You jest take a good look at the papers in the case and I don't believe you'll care much about defendin'. Still, as I told the Lord, I ain't exac'ly disposed to hog the whole shootin'-match. We might make some arrangement by which our friend here might keep a part of the property; I don't care so much about that. Well, you let me know how you come out, Trevelyan. So long, gents!" And the Colonel sauntered out of the room, puffing tranquilly.

About a week after this Colonel Bill, standing at the telephone in his dining-room, received a message from Sir Lyon Trevelyan that made him chuckle with delight.

"Say, Anse," he said to his son, as he hung up the receiver, "how's that love affair of Bess's gettin' along? Is his nibs still obstinate?"

"I believe so, sir. Bessie told me that young Greywood had declared himself and wanted to speak with you, but she wouldn't let him yet.

She thinks she can manage you better, for she's desperately afraid that you'll be opposed to her marrying a member of the aristocracy."

Colonel Bill laughed softly. "Well, Anse, supposin' we should find that we could oust old Greywood from his title and estates, what would you do?"

"Nothing, sir; nothing at all."

"What? Don't you want to be an Earl some day?"

"Most decidedly not, sir, even if I didn't have to take it from somebody else. I hope I'm not a jingo of the air-sawing stamp, but I am a true, dyed-in-the-wool American, and all the peerages in the United Kingdom couldn't make me give up the old flag!"

"Anse, my boy, put it there! And thank God for those words!" And the Colonel grasped his son's hand and wrung it again and again, while something very much like a tear glistened in his eye. For a moment neither spoke, but each felt that he was very, very near to the other's heart.

The Colonel was the first to speak, relinquishing his son's hand with an additional pressure.

"Anse, do you suppose you could find Bess and her young man this mornin'?"

"Yes, I happen to know they're at the National Gallery this morning."

"Good enough! You jest run over there and tell 'em I want to see 'em both here at twelve-thirty *pre-cisely* without fail, see? And you come along too."

"All right, sir." The young man looked at his watch and left the room.

An hour later Colonel Greywood rose from his desk in the library to receive a gentleman whom the page had announced. It was the

Earl of Greywood, but how much changed! His face was even thinner and his eye duller than usual, while his stoop seemed exaggerated and his walk almost a totter. He seemed to have grown ten years older in a week. The pathetic appearance of his namesake smote the Colonel's warm heart, but nevertheless he drew himself up as if he were on parade, and without a word motioned the Earl towards a chair, where the latter sat, shifting about and clearing his throat, apparently seeking for the proper manner to broach the subject of his call. The Colonel at last took pity on him.

"You've asked for this interview, I suppose," he said, "with some reference to the Greywood peerage case."

"Aw—yes—that is—aw—as a matter of fact I—aw—"

"You've examined the papers with your lawyers and found that my case ain't so bad after all, eh?"

"Well—aw—yes, that is, don't misunderstand me. I cannot admit that I am not the rightful Earl of Greywood. I—"

"What's that? Ain't you convinced that the eldest brother who went to America in 1745 was the rightful heir to the earldom?"

"As eldest son, no doubt."

"And that the title and estates would rightfully fall to his descendants?"

"Hm, yes."

"And you know that you are not descended from him?"

"Yes, but—"

"And that I am?"

"Well, the—aw—documents would seem to indicate a certain—aw—probability—"

"Proberbility!" exclaimed the Colonel, raising his voice. "You know as well as I do that it's a dead

certainty. Now then, what are you goin' to do about it?"

The Earl pulled himself together a bit. "There is one thing I wish to say before discussing the matter further," he replied; "namely, that, whatever the merits of this unfortunate case may be, I am, and always have been, entirely ignorant of any such claim against my predecessors or myself, and am, therefore, quite innocent of any intention whatever of taking what is not mine by right."

The Colonel looked severe and made no audible reply, but murmured to himself, "Good for you; that's a sound start."

The Earl resumed: "Several times during our late interview you—aw—mentioned the possibility of a—aw—compromise—"

"Yes, and you answered that you would see me in—I mean you got up on your high horse and wasn't even goin' to look over the papers."

"Sir," said the Earl, evidently controlling himself with difficulty, "I am here in all humility, disposed to listen patiently to any fair and reasonable proposals you may have to make."

"Fair and reasonable!" echoed the Colonel. "What is fair and reasonable for your side o' the family after keepin' mine out of its just rights for a hundred and fifty years? Nervy I call that! Fair and reasonable, sir, would be the restitution of the peerage and the estates which are by right my property."

The Earl rose and drew himself up while the red blood mantled his thin cheeks. In a voice quavering with emotion he answered:

"Sir, I repeat that I am here to listen to fair and reasonable proposals, but you will not forget that I am an Englishman and not afraid of a fight. And I have the honor to inform you that, rather than give up

the dignity that my ancestors have borne with honor for more than three centuries and thus brand half of them as usurpers, I *will* fight as long as there is a drop of blood in my body or a farthing left of my estate!"

Letting out a roar that fairly shook the windows, the Colonel jumped from his chair and strode towards the Earl, who involuntarily raised his hands to an attitude of defense. But the American's intentions were far from being hostile. Grasping the Earl's thin right hand in both his big ones, he exclaimed, "Now you're talkin'! That's the stuff I like to hear from a Greywood! No high horse and no cringin', jest clean hard fight! I thought I'd knock the sparks out o' you yet! There now, sit down again and let's talk the matter over quietly. We'll be friends in two shakes of a lamb's tail!" And he pushed the astonished Earl back into his chair. "There ain't the slightest cause to worry. I never had the least intention of really taking your peerage nor your property neither!"

"You never had any—" exclaimed the Earl in confusion.

"Not on your life, that is, provided I found *you* fair and reasonable."

"Me?"

"Yes, you, and I have a pretty clear idee that I *will* find you so, too. But hold on. You remember, I suppose, what the Governor of North Carolina remarked to the Governor of South Carolina?" asked the Colonel with a knowing wink, putting his finger on the electric button.

"The — aw — Governor of Carolina?"

"Yep, North Carolina. Remember?"

"Really, I can't—aw—recall."

"Well now, wouldn't that jar you? Funny how weak you Johnny Bulls

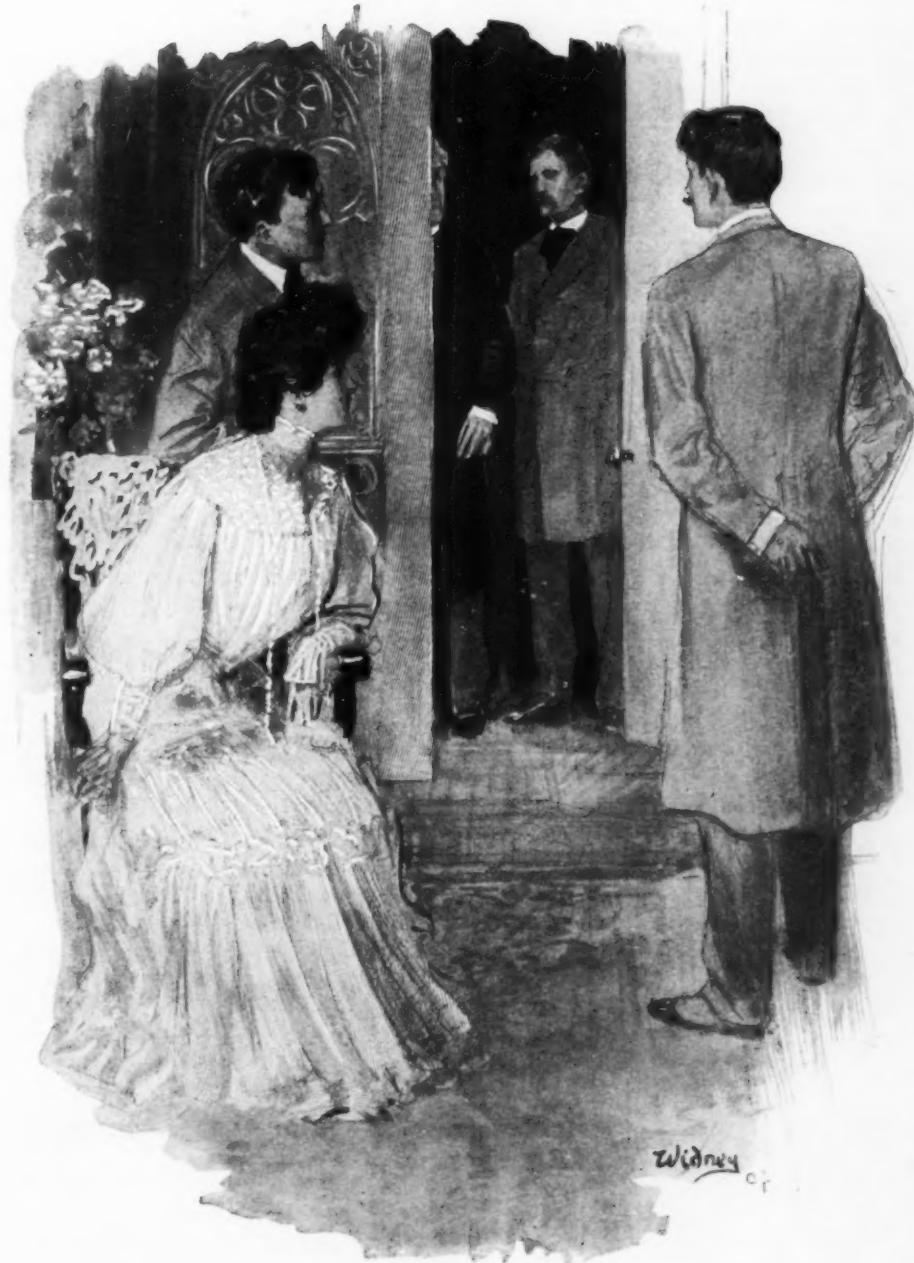
are on history. Well, the Governor of North Carolina says to the Governor of South Carolina, says he, 'It's a long time between drinks,' hohoho! And that remark seems to apply pretty well here, eh? Say, sonny," this to the entering page, "tell John to bring in the liquor and don't forget the soda. Now get a move on! Scat!"

The Earl was completely at sea in regard to the Colonel's real intentions, but the latter's declaration had relieved him mightily and he felt that any sacrifice short of the two already disclaimed would be insignificant. He had been convinced that he was in for a very nasty and tedious legal fight, with the too possible loss of his earldom as its result, and this new, though as yet unexplained, attitude of the Colonel's was like a flood of warm sunshine upon his troubled spirit. He thawed out accordingly.

"Haha! Very good about the two governors. But may I venture to remind you that you have not yet made me acquainted with your—aw—proposal in regard to —"

"Jest a moment and you'll know. But first—ah, here's the stuff. There," went on the Colonel, unlocking the set of decanters, "that's Scotch. I suppose that'll be your tipple, but your Uncle Dudley'll take the diluted fragrance of old Rye. Now, sir, a good stiff one. At our age it'll do us good. So—three fingers—so. And now I'll give you a toast: To the Earl of Greywood—from this day on may the name America mean for him and his, only friendship and happiness!" And with a bow worthy of the palmy days of southern chivalry he tossed off the brown liquor.

"Very kind of you, 'm sure!" said the Earl, following the Colonel's example.



DRAWN BY GUSTAVUS C. WIDNEY

"Taking the Earl by the arm, the Colonel threw open the door." See page 204

"And now," proceeded the latter, "here goes for the condition on which I engage to abandon the case of Greywood *versus* Greywood. Better steady yourself; it's a corker!"

"I am really anxious to learn it," replied the Earl, about whose anxiety there was no manner of doubt.

"It's simply this: that you won't stand in the way of our children's happiness."

"What?" gasped the Earl.

"Consent to their marriage—give 'em your blessin'."

"And—is that all?" inquired the astonished nobleman.

"Every bit!"

"And you'll drop the whole case on that one condition?"

"Hope to die if I don't! See this bundle? Well, it's a renunciation deed, or whatever they call it, for me and my heirs, done up in all form, so we couldn't bother you again even if we wanted to. Well, is it a bargain?" And the Colonel held out his hand.

"With all my heart," exclaimed the Earl, grasping it with energy.

At that moment voices were heard in the dining-room, which adjoined the library, and, taking the Earl by the arm, the Colonel threw open the

door and disclosed his daughter Bessie with Anson and Willoughby Greywood. The betrothed pair looked somewhat alarmed as they caught sight of the Earl.

"Bess," the Colonel sang out, "here's Lord Greywood. He's got somethin' to say to you."

The Earl advanced and took both Bessie's hands in his.

"My dear Miss Greywood," he said, "I am going to ask you a very great favor, namely, the privilege of calling you my daughter!"

"Father!" cried Willoughby Greywood, while Bessie threw her arms round the old Earl's neck and kissed him. He took one of her hands and placed it in that of his son. "See that you deserve her, my boy," he said, "for her own sake and for the sake of her father here, than whom no man more truly chivalrous ever bore the name of Greywood!"

Willoughby folded his beautiful betrothed in his arms.

"Look there, Greywood," exclaimed the Colonel. "That firm's goin' to prosper! Close corporation, eh?"

"Oh, you darling old daddy!" cried Bessie, disengaging herself from her *fiancé* and rushing into her father's arms.



Four Ciphers and a Crown

By Rem. A. Johnston

Decorations by W. Charles Tanner

COURT FOOL stood in the wild, warm June sunshine, and with his wooden sword drew circles in the sand that glistened at his feet like pure gold. The haze of summer painted gray and blue edges upon the stern outlines of the grim palace, and sent out long shimmering streaks of yellow to melt into the blue of the sky and into the wondrous green of the spring landscape. Something which no pen has ever described and which, for the moment, nature appeared to have caught out of the heart of eternity, quickened the day into unspeakable holiness. It was as if a bit of the magic sheen that never is seen on land or sea had been transfixated for an instant in the hovering air and by its wizardry held all things in strange and curious suspense.

The Fool sighed and smiled.

"There are only four such days as this in one's life," he murmured. "I hear Destiny knocking at my door."

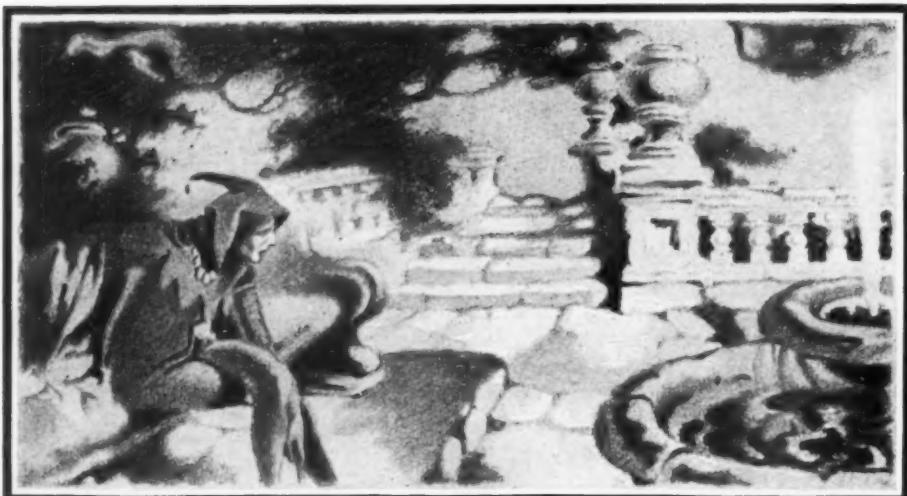
Then he went forward to dream in a cool bower where a tiny fountain sprinkled its ivied bowl happily and softly as sleep.

As he lounged upon a marble bench, busy with strange visions that came and went, Her Royal Highness wandered into the cool fastness. In this manner Fate

and Fortune came together. The Jester jingled his bells—and they sounded strangely in tune, as the Lady spoke.

"I am told, Sir Fool, that you are the drollest wit on earth, you who have been within these walls but one month's space. Pray you, amuse me, for I am very sad." Her voice wandered into the Jester's secret soul and stirred the tall, nameless flowers that grew therein.





He went forward to dream in a cool bower

"You honor me, Madam. Shall I dance—or jingle my bells?" the Fool answered.

"Do neither. Talk to me. I am very sad."

The Jester looked up and down. Until that hour, in all his little life, his tongue had never before been at a standstill when there was occasion to use it. But the witchery of the day was upon him, and something which had no name crowded upon his consciousness like the insistence of pain. He put out his cheeks.

"And is it a dumb Jester?" questioned the Lady, with a little laugh that was pathetic because there were tears behind it that must never be shed.

"Your Highness," returned the Fool, with an effort, "give me a chance—apoint from which to start."

She eyed him all over, from the top bell to the long sandal. At his wooden sword her lip quivered, but at his embroidered cloak her eye caught and hung.

"Fool, it pleases me to be amused with sober talk. What mean those four linked ciphers stitched upon your cloak?"

He started at the question, then looked away across the moat into the horizon, where a speck, which because of the distance seemed shaped like a toy castle, rose into the blue.

"The first link, Lady, stands for foolishness. 'For the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God' and 'the foolishness of God is wiser than men.'"

"That is pretty and from the Book," said the Lady, pleasedly. "For what is the second link?"

"The second link," mused the Jester, more slowly, "stands for eternity—that which has no beginning and no ending."

"A vast fool's thought, truly, but good. Now, the third cipher?"

The sun came into the Jester's eyes through tree branches and caused great blinding tears to flow.

"A soothsayer told me, years before I came to court, that the third link stood for a crown."

The Lady frowned and shook her red-brown hair until it caught in the light and seemed a writhing web of flame.

"And the fourth?"



Her Royal Highness wandered into the cool fastness

"I crave your gracious pardon, Lady, I may not tell you the meaning of the fourth. It was whispered to me by my mother, never to be repeated save by one other woman."

Then came a pause for seconds or hours, and they looked straight into each other's eyes. The spell of the day was upon them both, and that which was like a great fire burned them cruelly. Through the stillness so tense and so sweet that their ears could almost catch the breathing of the dead they both heard the sound that was like Destiny knocking on the door.

The Lady rested her head upon a marble pilaster. She was white like the Parian and her eyes were dim and deep like distant seas. Being royal, she watched the Fool steadily, and he, never wavering, forgetting his station, made his glances to sink down into the deepest wells of her soul—deeper, deeper, deeper, until the meaning touched the crimson of her heart and a red blaze swept up from her bosom across her throat and cheek in answer.

Out across the moat, swiftly, fearfully, rebelliously fled the Lady's glances, hither and thither. Finally they clung to the speck, which because of the distance seemed shaped like a toy castle. Then she clenched her tiny hands and wrung them.

"Oh, Fool, Fool, what have you done?" she moaned.

At these words the Jester flung himself forward and knelt at the Lady's feet.

"Speak, Madam, I am your servant and your knight. Tell me!" And his voice was strange to his garments.

The Lady arose, choking back the sobs, and looked down into the face of the man.

"Poor fellow! Poor Knight of the Wooden Sword! What could you do?"

"I could kill a man—I who never harmed a bird—I could kill a man for your sake!" cried the Jester.

Her Highness sat again. She did not smile or sigh. A tiny thought-frown gathered the creamy white of her brow into little layers of snow.



The spell of the day was upon them

"Have you knowledge of one Sir Richard Holdfast?" she asked.

"He shall have knowledge of me," replied the Jester. "Has he wronged you, Lady?"

"He would wrong me."

"How?"

"He would take me to be a wife to his brother. He is strong. He has slain all my knights one by one, and to-day I am unprotected and desolate." A little cry of loneliness ran in her tones. "One by one my bravest went out to meet him. They never came back."

The poor Lady's lips quivered

piteously at the tragedy of her house, and her bosom lifted and fell like a bush of white blossoms worried by a breeze.

Then arose the Jester from his knees. He flung his cap on the marble floor, and snapped in twain his sword of lath. To himself he swore great oaths, the while Her Highness held her fingers to her ears.

"And his brother, Madam?"

"I know him not, Fool, but I would not be sold to him were he Apollo. Is it not deadly trouble?"

"Let it fret you no more, Madam.

I shall kill this man." Her glances ran over his slight form with pathetic eagerness.

"I would that you could."

"I shall kill him—or he shall release your life to me," repeated the Fool, his eyes red and wild.

"I would that you could," she said again, half under her breath. Again the crimson sign flamed across her white breast, though her voice caught with a sob. She held out her hand bravely, however, and the Fool sank upon his knee to kiss it. When he arose both were trembling.

It was at this moment that a herald arrived with a message from Sir Richard Holdfast, bidding her to send forth another knight who should select his own weapons and fight to the death for a final settlement of the question.

"He shall start within an hour's space," concluded the Herald.

Then cried the Fool: "Say to Sir Richard Holdfast that Her Highness and escort will meet him by the willows on Wereford Mere."

The Herald gaped at the Jester haughtily.

"Go," said the Lady with a little flash of anger.

When he was gone she turned to the Jester with a tremulous smile.

"Be you fool or wise man, you are brave. But what would you do?"

In a few minutes the twain went riding forward into the stillness of June, and the dumb world watched them from the palace garden.

The Jester still swung his cap with its jangling bells and in his hand he carried his broken wooden sword. His face was daubed with sallow paint, but his eyes shone with a light that was like strong sunshine.

Her poor Highness looked at him furtively, and marveled. Save for his variant trappings she would not

have called him to be a Fool in that hour, because his bearing was that of a knight going forth to battle for a virgin's honor.

"What would you do, dear Jester?" she questioned again.

"I beg of you, Lady, to trust to me. I shall kill the man or release you to myself."

"I trust you may kill the man or release me to yourself," she whispered, and again her blood played tell-tale, though the Jester saw not.

Presently they were come to a little valley where there were willows and a brook that rambled and sang perpetually. Birds whistled and chirped in the bosky background and squirrels chattered there all the day. The sward upon the banks of the rivulet was green and firm. The spot was perfect for the purpose.

As they rode forward they found a single knight awaiting them. His armor was dread and black and he carried a broadsword. It was Sir Richard.

He bowed low to Her Highness, then looked up and beyond.

"I await your knight, Madam," said Sir Richard.

"I stand here, Sir Richard Holdfast, to do battle for the Lady. Is it your pleasure to win or lose in fair encounter?" cried the Jester.

But the Knight, more amused than angry at what he deemed an insolent sally of a court clown, ignored the Fool, and addressed himself to the Lady, repeating his former words.

"I await your knight, Madam."

Then the little Lady, all white and all royal, stepped forward. To the Jester it seemed that she had never before been so beautiful and so desirable.

"Sir Richard Holdfast, you have slain all my knights one by one. There is no one left to protect my honor save this poor Fool. Slay



My braves went out

him if you will; I have that in my hand which will prevent your claim. A venom'd dagger, only, and a fool's chance. My body you may take, but never my soul. Address my knight."

When the evil days came into the Fool's life he remembered this matchless moment—the vision of the Knight standing there grim as war, hateful as death, confronted by the pale Princess, who would die rather than surrender her maidenhood to any command other than love.

The Knight drew back and removed

his helmet. His face was stained by a great sorrow. Justice for the moment seemed present in the land.

"My poor Fool," he said, "are you alone the survivor of the royal court?"

"I am chosen for this hour, my Lord. Despise not the meanest until thou hast proven the best; and strike well, for it is said that Memory and Grief hunt hand in hand—I would have your later days filled with pleasant reminders."

The Jester's attitude was right knightly, but his sole weapon was a



They never came back

broken sword of wood, and he had no size in comparison with Sir Richard.

"Choose your arms, Fool, if indeed you are brave. I will call a man to bring them to you."

"They are chosen, My Lord. I will fight you with no other weapon than a broken wooden sword and a Fool's wit. Conquer me if you can. *Dixit.*"

For an instant the Knight marvelling, the truth shining but dimly in his dull brain. The Lady, however, gave a little cry of gladness, as if intuition pictured a beautiful sight upon the crest of a distant moment.

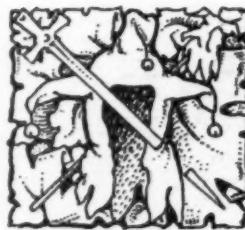
At last Sir Richard was made aware that the Fool had a right to fight in any way he would, and that the other must turn his great strength to a bout at single-stick, as it were. So he hewed him a tree-branch of the length and weight of the sword of the Jester, and with grim face advanced to the play. Disdaining armor, he cast aside his coat of mail, and stood forth in the color garments of his house—green silk with a stripe of yellow.

When they began it was both pleasure and pain that brought shadows to the Lady's cheek. At

the first the great Lord bore down heavily with wicked blows. So slight seemed the Jester that it appeared only a question of seconds until his guard should be broken or his lath shivered; yet slight as he was, a certain wither-like quality, as of blue steel, which though bent to the breaking must still snap back to place again, showed in his form.

Again and again they circled to and fro; the Knight attacking with ardor and fearlessness, the Fool fencing with wondrous skill and ease. Now advancing, now retreating, side-stepping, thrusting, striking, they beat each other to and fro upon the sward. As they warmed to the work great drops of sweat stood on the Knight's forehead. So fierce were his blows that it seemed certain that he must shiver the Jester's staff or break through his guard and deliver a mortal blow. Still the Fool eluded each danger by a fleet step, a clever twist, or a subtle parry. And once, as if by magic, he played out until the lath, which was of oak, hurtled demoniacally through the air. As he stepped back he flicked a bit of flesh from the left temple of Sir Richard Holdfast.

The Knight fell back with an oath and a great laugh.



They found a single knight awaiting them



"God's body, boy!" he cried, panting, "but one man in the world knows that trick. How came you by it? You had killed me if you had played a quarter of an inch deeper."

"Ay," quoth the Fool.

Again the wooden blows rang savagely through the peaceful valley, drowning the harmless chatter of the brook. Now they wound about in dizzy circles, battering at each other's guards, for the great strain was telling upon Knight and Jester alike. Faster and faster the play went on, until even above the sound of blows came the harsh gurgling of inward breaths.

The Lady looked at her Fool in warm, satisfied wonder. Who was he who fenced so like a god? Her heart kept step with the twinkling of his feet.

Now came a change. They flung back from each other and circled, crouching for an opportunity to leap and so to drive in a final blow. It came and went as the other. A trickle of red began to write its rubric upon the right temple of Sir Richard.

"God's blood, boy!" he cried again, "you could have slain me. Who are you? I know but one man on earth who plays that trick so neatly."

"Ay," murmured the

Fool. And the clatter of blows rang out again in stuttering cadences.

A faintness came upon the Lady as she watched them whirl. Her heart stiffened with sorrow. Why had her Jester failed twice to take the life he had promised her? Was there ever before such a Fool in all God's world?

Even as he questioned, the battle came to an abrupt end—like a broken chord in a lute's melody. The Fool had twisted the club from the Knight's hand by a double stroke, and, instead of following up the advantage by breaking Sir Richard's skull, he beat him playfully over the breast.

The moment's loss had been too much. The Knight had flung himself to the ground, and seizing the Fool's limbs, brought him heavily to earth, the Jester under his heel.

"Kill me, Dick," cried the Jester.

"Who names me 'Dick'?" roared the Knight. "What daub of paint is this?"

Then he bent down and lifted the Jester in his arms. He wiped the color from his cheeks and felt the matted hair from which the bells jingled—then he knew.

"My Lady," said Sir Richard Holdfast, humbly, "I crave your pardon. I give my life into

this strange Fool's hands, or I release your life to him gladly, whichever way you will."

But Her Highness had no ear, being dumb with fear and grief.

"Have you slain him, Sir Richard?"

"Nay—only a faint."

"Have you slain him—and won?" she repeated

"Nay, Lady. And 'twas only by a chance, my winning. He might have killed me thrice, but would not so. I resign your life. He is—he is no Fool."

"He is—he is no Fool," repeated the Princess, dully.

Then she bent down beside the fallen man, caressing his painted cheek; and her touch was like that of a woman in love. Her hand stole over the Jester's face. His eyes opened and leveled to the caress.

"The meaning of the fourth circle—" he began, but she covered his lips.

"Madam," said Sir Richard, again, and his voice seemed very far away to those who saw only each other, "Madam, he is no Fool. He is my brother."

But the Lady answered not, nor did the Jester, for their eyes were speaking the language of the heart, and their sorrows were banished.



The Talent of Jo Ann Jolly

BY MARGARET BUSBEE SHIPP

"I's gwine ter leave de Pistahpal Chu'ch en go ter hell right. Miss Lucy's chickens done scratched up mah beans, en I stays in no chu'ch whar de membahs 'low dey chickens sech freedery. Yer hyar me, nig-gah? Yer needn' talk mealy-mouth at me, fer mah min' hit's made up!"

I heard Uncle Mose expostulating politely, excusing my chickens on the score of youthful ignorance.

"Po' leetle fryin-size things, dey doan' know no bettah! I sho wouldn' 'low a passel er pullets ter 'sturb mah membahship. Doe ef yer do quit dem Pistahpals, Sis Jo Ann, dey ain't no need fer de hell-road; yer bettah jine us Mefodys."

Thankful that the privet hedge screened me from my wrathful neighbor, I made my escape. Later in the day, I ordered Mose to replant the beans, and as a peace-offering, I sent a nice dinner at the same time.

"What did she say?" I asked, a shade over-eagerly. My servants are a little scornful of my efforts to live in peace with my neighbor.

"She sez, 'Humph, doan' Miss Lucy know I's sick? Huccome she ain't sont nuthin' but dinnah? Las' time she sont suppah en brastus too!'"

My husband had overworked, in the shortsighted way strong men will do, and the doctors had recommended a year in the South. A few months' rest made Francis as well as ever, and we had only the excuse of a year's lease to detain us in our pretty cottage. It was a case of love at first sight—we were charmed with the picturesque gables, the wide porches, the rose-garden, the banksia arbor, the beds of mignonette, gilly-

flowers, pinks, and all the dear old-fashioned favorites. Francis liked the sunny vegetable-garden, the bed of asparagus and the long rows of "burr-artichokes" which argued well for the spring. To me, the chief attraction of the place was the privet hedge that went all around it.

"I like to feel screened from any inquisitive passer-by," I said to the woman from whom we were to rent. Fortunately, there are no near neighbors."

Just at that moment, as I stood on tiptoe to peep over the hedge, I saw there was a neighbor. The most dilapidated cabin stood at the rear of the garden, and a colored woman was filling a clothesline with nondescript garments.

"Oh!" I cried in dismay, "can't that horrid little hut be torn down?"

My landlady smiled, and shook her head. Then she told me the story of the tenancy of Jo Ann Jolly.

"Before the war, she belonged to the Satterthwaites, one of the oldest and wealthiest families in our part of the State. Jo Ann was maid to young Mrs. Satterthwaite. Delia was the prettiest, daintiest little creature! We girls used to think nobody else had such sheer organdies or such shimmering silks. Her husband was a great big fellow who adored and spoiled her, and I don't suppose the shadow of a care had ever touched her until the war came. She didn't take it a bit seriously. The day the company went out from here, she was flitting around, graceful and happy as a humming-bird, and full of pretty orders to Robert—her husband, you know—about what he should bring her from New York.

"Mind, Bob, I give you only



DRAWN BY JOHN CLITHEROE GILBERT

"Yer needn' talk mealy-mouth at me, fer mah min' hit's made up."

two months to capture it! I can't let you stay away longer than that!" she said.

"He laughed and promised to come back, as proud as could be that his wife was smiling and lightsome,

when all the other women were weeping sorely. Robert was the first man killed in that company, and his body was brought home within the two months! It killed Delia; she didn't make much effort against it,

though she obeyed the doctor in a numb sort of way. But she didn't live six months, and I guess it was the best, for she was like a delicate bit of china, and not fitted for rough uses."

"But Joan?" I asked, for my fealty is given to those "who never turn the back, but march face foremost," and I fear I have small patience with even the loveliest ladies who passively lie down and die.

"Not Joan, Jo Ann. She was named for two of Robert's aunts, Josephine and Ann. Well, Jo Ann has her sterling qualities, as she proved by her devotion to Delia. Day and night she nursed her, and Delia would turn from every one to Jo's faithful care. Just before she died, she set Jo Ann free and gave her this house and lot. It was on the edge of the old Satterthwaite plantation, but the big house is burned, and the plantation broken up into lots and sold, this many a year. Jo Ann lived there for years and nobody disputed her right, until in the '70's they began to get the town government in better shape, and Jo Ann was told to pay her taxes, about a dollar a year. She was making fair wages as a cook, but she steadily refused to pay. Finally the sheriff warned her that she would be sold out if she didn't pay.

"Who is you ter talk er tu'nin' me outen mah house Miss Dee gimme? Yo' folkes wuz de dut on de road wen de Satterthwaites wuz gran' ez kings in de Bible! I like ter see enny po' trash teck 'way mah mistis' gif' from me!"

"The sheriff 'got his dander up,' as the darkies say, and advertised the place for sale. It was bought by old Mr. David Hendricks, who has the name of being the closest man in the county. Everybody thought he

would turn Jo Ann out, but he gives in her taxes with the rest of his property, and has never had anything to say to her but once. Somebody told Jo Ann, before Mr. Hendricks' face, that she ought to thank him for his kindness in giving her a home. 'Whut I gwine ter keep on er-thankin' fer whut's done mine? I ain't beholden ter him, ner nobody 'cep' mah leetle mistis.' 'You're quite right, Jo Ann,' he said. That put me to thinking that they did say, for all his gruff ways, that he used to be in love with Delia before she married Robert—but it's all so long ago, I don't know!"

My landlady's story had one effect, I never again wished to dispossess my neighbor.

My first speaking acquaintance with Jo Ann was on the wedding-day of my cook's daughter. My husband and I had gone to her home to contribute our present, when Jo Ann walked in, without the formality of a knock.

Her scornful eye swept the array of pretty gifts, and rested on a picture of "Psyche at Nature's Mirror."

"Whut's dat able-bodied crittah er-doin' wid dem teeny wings? Dey ain't big enuff fer her ter fly wid; I reckon she hitched 'em on ez er 'scuse fer not keepin' on her clo'es! I wants folkes ter gimme presints got some sense en use. Hyar's a dishpan fer de bride, en er pa'r er socks fer de grume."

"Jo Ann," I said, mustering courage, "Aunt Viny will be busy at home for two days. Can you take her place in the kitchen?"

She took this as a slur on her powers. "I likes ter know who kin cook ef I kain't! I kin take eggs en hominy en fry 'em so dey tastes like brains, en fry 'em ernuddah way en yer kain't tell em frum fish, en I



DRAWN BY JOHN CLITHEROE GILBERT

"Sis' Jo Ann's bo'dah."

nebbah seed nary uddah cook who kin do dat!"

I found her cooking well-nigh perfect, and I had two weeks to test it in, for Aunt Viny was ill after the festivities, and delayed coming back to us. I had never had any experience with colored help before I came South, and my husband teases me about what he terms my "emphasized friendliness" towards them.

"It's just like the way you make a dead set at a bore, as if you're thinking, 'Now, I know you are hard to entertain, but I'm the very one to do it!' You have that same ingratiating manner towards the colored people, and they don't understand

it or like it. I heard that old Joe-woman say, 'Humph, she ain't used ter servants. Reckon she nebbah had none 'foah dis, reckon she ain't much whar she cum frum no way!'"

"But Aunt Viny didn't run over me roughshod," I protested. "The truth is, Francis, I'm scared of Jo Ann! If I make a suggestion as to the cooking, she grumbles, 'Dat ain't de way 'twus done at de Satterthwaites en dey ain't no fixin' vittles finah en dey had 'em!' I told her, with all the dignity I could muster, that my husband preferred the sweetbreads cooked as I said. She sniffed, 'What's you en he, ennyhow, but a pa'r o' chilluns?'"

Francis laughed, and went out into the rose-garden. Presently he called, "Come here, dearie, and tell me whether this tea is a Devoniansis."

"I am coming, my own, my sweet!" I quoted jestingly, as I went to join him.

Passing by the kitchen, I heard a contemptuous snort. Jo Ann was mumbling to herself, "Dearie! Own! Sweet! Dey's at hit all day long, en he jes' 'courageous her in bein' so follified! Dey bettah be er-thinkin' less 'bout deyselves, en steddyin' moah 'bout de bottomless pit!"

I called my husband "Mr. Prescott" for the rest of Jo Ann's stay. The fortnight under her autocratic rule made me understand why she was generally at work in the fields, and rarely in domestic service.

When the spring deepened into summer, work began on a new railroad, bringing a number of negro "hands" into the village. My suspicions were aroused by a slouching creature whom I saw hanging around my garden. Upon investigation, Mose brought the news that it was "Sis Jo Ann's bo'dah." The boarder was at work on the railroad, but returned to Jo Ann's at sunset, when she cooked his supper and immediately afterwards left the house. I asked where she went, and was told that she was staying with "Ole Aunt Pinky."

"Pinky's mighty sick, en she hain't got nobody 'cep'n Jo Ann ter look attah her."

"Is she Jo Ann's sister?"

"Naw, ma'am, dey hain't no kin dat ebbah I heard tell uv. But Pinky she used ter b'long ter de Sattah-thwaites, en Jo Ann she tecks keer er her 'kase o' dat. She ses she hain't gwine ter 'low her mistis's niggahs ter die po' en common ez ef dey useter b'long ter sech trash ez de Stunketts. Po' Pinky, her sight

hit's 'mos' gone, en her laigs is clean gin out, ebertying 'mos' gone but her ap'tite, en Jo Ann sez she sho is gwine ter pampah dat. Hit presses mighty hard on Jo Ann, hit suddenly do, but she sho is lettin' Pinky die on de fat uv de lan'."

Again I felt my inability to comprehend my neighbor's complex character, but I sent word to Jo Ann that she might come by for Pinky's dinner every day.

I met Jo Ann after this arrangement had been going on for a month, and to my surprise, she volunteered her thanks. This was the first touch of suavity I had ever seen her manifest, and I was struck by a certain jauntiness in her gait and manner. I could not refrain from questioning Mose, the next time I was superintending some of his planting.

"Mose, Jo Ann doesn't look as glum as she used to do."

Mose grinned. "Dey ain't nuttin' like er beau ter meck de wimmen spry up er bit. Her bo'dah is her beau, dey tells me. Jo Ann she sez dat he's er-beggin' en er-coaxin' wid her ter marry him. I axed him, en he jes' laff, en sez sezee, 'I hain't got but one speshul objection ter Miz Jolly, her house is pizen dufty,' sezee. Den I spoke ter Jo Ann, 'kase hit seemed er pity fer her ter lose her chanst, en dis de fust she ebbah had, en she gwine on ter sixty! 'Why doan' yer clean up yer house?' I axed her. 'I dassn't,' sez she, 'kase 'bout five yeahs back er snake crep' in, en he's er-hidin' in some uv dese cracks en co'nahs, en I's skeert ter sweep, I mought 'sturb dat snake,' sez she."

This controversy over the serpent, which has been getting man and woman into trouble since the beginning of things, lasted a month or two. I grew suspicious when I



DRAWN BY JOHN CLITHEROE GILBERT

"He's gone 'way wid mah gole."

heard the man had paid no board, arguing that if Jo Ann should decide to clean up the house and marry him, it would be a shame for her to have taken money from her future husband.

My worst fears were confirmed when, one morning before breakfast, Jo Ann came running in, her disordered face and frenzied manner showing that she was almost beside herself.

"He's gone 'way wid mah gole, mah money en mah gole! Two pieces of gole, en fohty-nine dollahs en fohty-five cents! O Lawdy, Lawdy!"

She rocked back and forth, in such anguish that it was hard to get at the facts. When she returned from Pinky's that morning, the boarder had vanished, while the piles of quilts and heaps of rubbish gave evidence that they had been systematically overhauled.

"I had er gole fingah-ring Miss Dee gimme, en er bresspin wid er teeny dimant. Mah po' leetle mistis she tuk it outen her box en sez, 'Hyar, Jo Ann, yer keep dis, I had hit on de day I heerd 'bout yo' Marse Robert. Nobody'll keer fer hit mo'n you, so w'ar hit ter 'membah me by.' En I's wo' dat pin ebery Sunday en ebery funeral sence dat day. En now hit's gone! En he stole a ruffled petticoat en two silk hankchers, en Abe Tayloe sez he reckons he tuk 'em fer his wife, dat he got er wife at Paw Creek."

Francis was as angry as I was, and we turned the matter over to the local police and wired to Paw Creek as well. In the end, the rascal was caught and the pin recaptured, but of course the money was all gone. I had asked her why she kept her money at home, but she was obstinately taciturn in regard to it. In her joy at getting back the pin and

learning that her quondam suitor was in jail, her reserve melted, and she told us, what she had never told any one before, that she was saving her money to take music-lessons! She had been saving ever since the war, but only in the cotton-picking season could she make anything more than what her meager necessities demanded.

"Have you ever written the principal of the school that you were coming?" I asked.

"I's waitin' ter git de full sixty dollahs befo' I writ. En now hit's all gone, en I's sot back en got ter start agin."

I began to regard the theft as a blessing in disguise. If by any chance the old woman could be admitted to the school, where all the other pupils were young colored students in their teens, how impossible it would be to train her hands, knotted and gnarled as the rough bark of a tree, to the most rudimentary exercises!

"How did you ever happen to think of taking lessons, Jo Ann?" asked my husband.

"Hit wuz dis way: I'd jes' done washin' mah mistis's ha'r (she had shiny, crinklin' ha'r), en she sez she wuz gwine ter practice at de pianny w'iles I breshed hit dry. En she wuz playin' er purty tune, en I sez I b'leaved I could play. En she laffed en tole me ter try. En I picked out on de keys er leetle song I heerd, en den I made de soun' like Bob W'ite en some nuddah birds, en mistis jes' clap her leetle bit o' han's en sez, 'Jo Ann, youse got rale talent fer music! I's gwine ter teach yer ter play, en won't yer Marse Robert be s'prised w'en he comes home!' Den she gimme er lesson ebery day twell dat day come wen de pianny wuz shet, en nebbah opened no mo'. En I's allus been

meanin' ter go on wid mah lessons, but I's waited so long, I reckon I kin wait longah!"

When the cotton-picking season opened, Jo Ann was at work early and late, and we guessed that she was trying to lay aside extra money for the musical education. We expostulated with her for overworking, but she replied gruffly, and I feared she regretted the rare impulse which had taken us into her confidence.

October was unusually dry and warm, and one Sunday I missed Jo Ann from the rear seat she was accustomed to occupy at church. I stopped at her cabin on my return, and found her very ill. She told me she had had a "stroke," when in the fields the day before. I could get her to say no more, and by the time the doctor had reached there, she was too delirious to explain anything. We found that she had left the field at noon, without a word to anybody, walked a mile home, and had been without food or medicine since.

She lay unconscious most of the time, but now and then would rouse herself to quarrel fiercely; sometimes about her "gole," again with the unknown miscreant who had stolen the figs from her bush, or with Mose and the chickens, and actually—and most fiercely of all—with poor me! I heard myself called 'dat Yankee 'ooman, wid no breedin' en no raisin', 'kase she's allus pesterin' 'bout uddah folks's bizness!"

She had been ill for several days when I came in with her broth one morning, to find the doctor already there. He set my broth aside and shook his head. I saw that she had changed greatly during the night.

Then I heard her speak, and if I had not with my own ears heard it, I could never have believed that her gruff, harsh voice could take on that note of utter gentleness, of reverential devotion.

"I heerd yer callin' me, Miss Dee. Yer sez hit's time fer yer ter gimme mah music-lesson? All right, leetle mistis, I's ready!"

A Change of Accent

BY ANNA MATHEWSON

"And yet, some day you will marry me."

"Oh, yes!"

"How beautiful those two little words might be, if the accent were different!"

"I am sorry, Mr. Harford; but when one means 'No,' it should be said definitely."

"Very tiresome people live up to their convictions. I am so glad that you do not."

"Don't I?"

"*Du tout, Ma'm'selle!* You have not said 'No.' Your reply was 'Oh,

yes!' Still, I am aware that you mean 'No'—to-day; but as there can be no certainty that you will mean it a week from to-day, please leave it unsaid, and there will be less to retract. Am I going too fast for you?"

"Conversationally, yes. You are reaching conclusions at a hundred miles a minute. It is not the automobile that is taking away my breath."

"Not really arriving at any conclusions, I hope. I want this to be a continued-in-our-next for a long

while. Probably I did take you rather by surprise; but if you will kindly entertain my proposition in a corner of your heart—you are such a charming hostess, as we all know—perhaps, when its features are more familiar, they may seem less impossible. And the story is more interesting when the heroine does not make up her mind too quickly."

"But a girl who keeps a man in suspense—it is unfair."

"Unfair to the man? Pardon; it is a great deal fairer to give him time. If you absolutely decline to consider the matter, you may miss points in my favor. I want all the chances there are. As for the suspense: I should be in that state anyway, until you married some other man. Even then, one might continue to suspend, with a hope that his constitution was below par."

"You take a cheerful view of it."

"Why be miserable? Misery loves company, but I never heard that anybody loves misery—and I want somebody to love me. I feel cheerful because I am positive that on one of the occasions when I assert, respectfully but hopefully, that you are going to marry me, you will answer 'Oh, yes!' minus the original accent."

"See that flock of sheep—no, farther than way. Aren't they picturesque? But why are they never really so white as they are painted? I sometimes wonder whether painters play a hose on them before starting a picture."

"No hose could throw cold water with more dampening effect upon anything from a lamb to a lover than you can, when you turn the conversation like that, Miss Melton. May I humbly ask if you heard my last remark?"

"Oh, yes! You may ask."

"Now, an 'Oh, yes!' of that sort,

punctuated by a dimple, is really not so bad. But, returning to our own muttons; it would save time for us to discuss this affair to-day. If we were to try talking of anything else, we should be thinking about this underneath; shouldn't we?"

"I am quite sure that talking can make no difference in my decision."

"But I shall feel that you have considered it dispassionately and from several points of view. It takes a girl with an unusual breadth of mind to do that, impersonally and logically; however, I am convinced that you can."

"Well—"

"Suppose we take the affirmative. The smaller an intellect, the more apt it is to see things from a negative standpoint, you know. It is less difficult to write a harsh criticism than a just appreciation. Or, you might ask questions; such as, when did I fall in love with you?"

"But—"

"You are not afraid of a trifle like that?"

"Certainly not. When did you begin to—er—be so ridiculous?"

"Falling in love with you was far from ridiculous; it was a proof of good sense. We will assume that you put that question properly. It must have been the first time that I saw you blush—just as you are doing now—pink, exactly the right shade, spread over the cheeks, close enough to the eyes to make them a deeper blue, and bringing out that dimple in the chin; not at all the way most people do it, with their foreheads scarlet and uncomfortable-looking. It is hardly right of you, because a man is tempted into saying things to make it come; and yet, it is well to restore his shattered faith in complexions. Now another, please—I mean another question."

"Why can't you try some other girl?"

"Do you happen to have a twin sister, exactly like you?"

"What a Yankee way of answering a question!"

"If there is one thing I am proud of, it is my New England ancestry. Even a disinterested person would tell you that no suitable husband for an American woman is without it. In that case, those two Englishmen, that musical German and the California chap would be out of the race; and I should breathe more freely."

"If it will aid your respiration, I can assure you that no foreigner has ever been in the race. Perhaps I could even promise to—to care for a New England man. I know ever so many, and they are all delightful—"

"But they don't want you as much as I do, or they would be here this minute! If another man were trying to win your heart, do you suppose he would be wasting his time, letting you ride with me, and wear my flowers, and smile at me as you did just now? No; he would wring my neck—if he could! Well, that does sound savage, but when a man thinks

a girl is meant for him, he gets down to first principles. The moment I met you, I knew that my time had come. I have been waiting a long while for the right one. I have worked hard, for I don't believe in asking a woman to share crusts and cottages and that sort of thing, just because one has been too lazy or selfish to provide what she ought to have. You understand what I mean; I am not a millionaire; but the travel, the books, the music, the pictures, the home in the country, that we both care so much for—you should have all those, and anything else that a strong pair of hands could bring you. I thought I was telling the truth when I said there was no hurry for an answer; but I must have it now—the promise that sometime it is all going to come true. You have learned to know me pretty well, but you cannot begin to realize how I love you. It will take the rest of my life to show you that. I don't pretend that I am good enough for you, dear; and no matter how hard I shall try to give you happiness, I may make mistakes, and yet—some day, you will marry me?"

"Oh—yes!"



One Hallowe'en and After

BY NAOMI HARROUN

The occupant of the chair next the window was a pretty young woman. Not one of the conspicuous *à la mode* type, of drooping pompadour, cloud-tilting hat, and exaggerated belt curve, but the fresh, girlish prettiness of wavy hair, bright eyes, and delicately flushed cheeks. In the fleeting glance she had given him in answer to his question about the vacant chair beside her, Graham had had an instant impression of familiarity. Where had he seen her? He opened his magazine and looked searchingly at the benign countenance of an elderly gentleman who had lately achieved a place "in the public eye," but he was really hunting down that illusive memory of a girl's face through the mazes of half-forgotten things.

Where had he seen her? He stole a glance at her face bent over her book—soft waves of red-brown hair, a bit of white forehead, a hint of dark eyelashes, and a pink-flushed cheek. If she would only turn her head! But she seemed absorbed in her book. She wished no window raised or curtain lowered, her chair did not need adjusting, and none of her belongings slipped to the floor. She leaned her cheek against her hand and read on intently. Graham turned the pages of his magazine and tried to remember. The face seemed connected with college days. He had the feeling that he had seen it many times. But if he had, how could he have forgotten?

The hazy glow of the late October twilight began to settle over the wide, flat stretches of country that slid by monotonously outside. The girl finally closed her book and sat looking out into the dim brightness.

The train man came through the car lighting the lamps, and as he paused near them, she half turned with lifted eyes to watch him. Graham remembered!

"I beg your pardon," he said, as the man moved on, "don't you—do you know Reeves Keeton?"

The girl gave him a quick, surprised look.

"Why, yes, I know him—I've always known him." "But what is that to you?" her look added.

"And Keeton has a sister Alice and aren't you her friend and isn't your given name Champ?"

He rattled this off with such boyish eagerness that the girl's eyes grew merry.

"Are you a mind-reader or a clairvoyant?" she asked demurely.

"Oh, I say, you must think me rather presuming, but I knew at once that I'd seen you before, and have been cudgeling my brain to remember—that does not sound very complimentary, I know—and I used to see your picture in Keeton's room along with his sister's. Keeton and I were in the same frat. You may have heard him speak of me—of course you wouldn't remember, though—Graham, Philip Graham."

The girl looked at him meditatively for a moment. Then she laughed a little bubbling laugh.

"The original Graham cracker." The great Graham that won the Thanksgiving game against Michigan—and made Dean Coulton smile—

"And both of these
He did with ease—
This original Graham cracker."

"Yes, I guess I have heard Reeves

mention you. And I've seen your picture, too," she went on, the dimple deepening in her cheek, "though I shouldn't have recognized you from it. It was in the pink part of the Sunday paper and you had a roll of sweater propping up your chin and a great C curving over your chest."

Graham shrugged his broad shoulders with a deprecating laugh.

"That is the dizziest height on the ladder of fame—pink pictures," he said modestly. "I hope, Miss—but I don't believe I ever knew you as anything but Champ. I know for a

long time I thought it was your family name."

"Champlin Gurney is my name," she answered primly. "It's a queer name, I know—Champ. My admiring brother says it sounds like a Shetland pony. It's a sort of family heirloom. Mother was a Kentucky girl, and the oldest child in every branch of the family, no matter whether it's a son or a daughter, is always a Champlin. Some day I hope some one will come along strong-minded enough to break the entail."

"Oh, but I think it's so pretty."



DRAWN BY T. M. WILDER

"He had the feeling that he had seen her many times."

he rejoined eagerly. "So quaint. It seems to fit you some way."

She shook her head doubtfully.

"I don't know whether that is a compliment or not—to be called quaint."

They both laughed. Graham had a sudden warm feeling that he had known this girl always. They fell to talking like old friends met after a long absence.

She was on her way home from a visit to Alice Keeton, and could tell him much about his old chum and his experiences out in the Idaho mining district. She talked brightly, with just a trace here and there of soft Southern drawl, caught perhaps from the little Kentucky mother. She was only a year out of Smith College, and they swapped college stories gleefully. Graham had spent part of the year before in a northern logging-camp and described the life there with many humorous little touches. It was only when the train man came through and turned the lights low, that they realized how fast the time had flown by.

"I suppose we ought not to talk," she said half-regretfully. "That old lady across the aisle looked at us very crossly just now. I think she wants to sleep. Perhaps you would like a nap, Mr. Graham," she suggested demurely.

"We can talk low," he said by way of answer. "Let me lower your chair a little. Then you can lean back and rest."

Her hat kept tipping about uncomfortably as she leaned her head against the cushion, and she finally took it off. The shaded light fell softly across her face and bright brown hair. A little lock lay across her cheek and Graham had an intense desire to brush it back behind her ear. He remembered seeing a man do that once and think-

ing it the most unutterably idiotic action. Well—

She was drawing off her gloves and suddenly Graham felt an odd catch in his throat. On the third finger of her left hand he caught the flash of a diamond, and above it as a guard was an odd little ring with two hearts entwined, that he remembered seeing all one winter on Keeton's watch fob. Well—of course—why hadn't he thought of it before? Well—it was all right. His thoughts trailed off miserably and his eyes went back to her hand. The girl looked up and followed his glance. A wave of hot color swept over her face, and a look, half-frightened, half ashamed, came into her eyes. She began nervously straightening her crumpled gloves. Graham shook himself into mental equilibrium again and, *apropos* of nothing in particular, made some low-toned and laughing observations on traveling by night. The girl answered in a merry whisper, and for a few minutes they conscientiously talked airy nothings. Then the conversation languished. She turned her eyes to the window and he stared off over the head of the slumbering man in front of him at the dim outline of the water cooler.

He didn't quite know what had happened to him. He felt a sickening sense of having lost something he had just found. Of course it was very foolish. He would see it more sensibly in the morning—when he had a chance to think it out straight—when he was alone. Again he felt that odd catch in his throat. He was always going to be alone after this. He gave a quick look at the girl beside him. Her face was shadowed, but he could see her wide dark eyes and her mouth with its little alluring droop, half wistful, half smiling. Ah—Champ! Then



DRAWN BY T. M. WILDER

"He had a sudden vision of a flying figure." See page 228

his glance fell again to her hands. They were clasped in her lap and the ring was hidden. She was engaged to his friend! Dear old Keeton—well, he was always a lucky beggar—Keet. He must write and tell him so.

"Now, Mr. Graham," she said, as the train neared the station where she was to get off, "remember if you are ever in Evansville you must hunt us up. You have the number? I've a young football fiend of a brother who will esteem it a greater honor to meet you than the President of the Republic. We'll all be glad"—her breath fluttered.

"Thank you. I surely will if I'm ever near. Just tell old Keeton you saw me, when you write. You're sure some one will meet you?"

"Oh, yes, there's father and Bunny. Yes, they see me." She left her hand in his for a little moment as he helped her down the steps. "Good-bye, Mr. Graham."

And he went back and sat down and stared for a long time at the chair where she had sat.

The shaded veranda looked wonderfully cozy and inviting. A screen of vines shut out the sunlight. There were rugs, a white, lazily-

swaying hammock, and low rocking-chairs. A little table held a great bowl of gay nasturtiums and there were bright cushions galore. Graham decided he would sit down a few minutes in the laziest-looking chair. Perhaps the mistress might return soon. Stewart had made him promise that he would go out and see his sister when he was in Evansville.

"I guess Sis is pretty lonesome down there. They haven't been married long enough for her to get used to having Craige gone so much, and she don't know many people there yet. She will be tickled to death to see anybody she ever saw before."

"Thanks awfully," returned Graham dryly.

"Oh, you know what I mean."

Yes, he knew—and here he was rocking idly in one of Sis's wicker chairs and counting the cushions scattered about. How women always took to cushions! he reflected. But then they could do more furbishing with a half-dozen cushions and bits of plants than a man with a furniture shop. He took up a little embroidered pillow from a near-by chair. A spray of brown leaves and bright berries trailed across its top. Brown—they reminded him of her hair—that same warm red-brown. Everything seemed to remind him of her. She had a little band of just that red about her throat. Ah—well, probably she was married before this—Keeton's wife. No, he would surely have had cards. She lived here in this very town. In an hour he could see her, if he wished. But he didn't wish, he told himself stubbornly.

"But perhaps if you saw her again you would get over this delusion. See her in broad daylight as your friend's *fiancée*. Perhaps that will

knock some sense into your silly head," something whispered. But he laid the cushion on his knee and fell to dreaming dreams.

The sun disappeared under a cloud, a little breeze sprang up, and a sudden dash of rain roused Graham from his musing.

"Well, now you will have to wait sure, you chump," he meditated.

The rain came down harder and he had a sudden vision of a flying figure—fluffy skirts caught high in one slender hand, an uplifted arm from which the light sleeve fell back, a glowing face, and wind-swept strands of red-brown hair. As she ran up the steps, he rose with outstretched hands.

"You!" he cried joyously, forgetting everything except that she was here and that she was more dear even than in his dreams.

For one instant under the shine of his eyes and the gladness in his face, the girl faltered. Then, after the manner of girls, she hid her confusion in a show of startled friendliness.

"Why, Mr. Graham, this is too sudden. How came you here?"

"Oh, I'm calling on a lady who isn't at home. I'm being introduced to her family of cushions," he said gayly. "Here, sit here. I don't believe the rain will touch you there."

"But I don't understand. Do you really know the people here or did you just run in out of the rain as I did?"

"Oh, I know them—or I did know the lady once. She is my partner's sister—just married and moved here last spring. Stewart made me promise to come out, when he found I had to stop off here."

"I don't know many people in this part of town. What a dear, cozy place! You could guess it was a bride's—all so fresh and new."



DRAWN BY T. M. WILDER

"You're not engaged to Keeton now?" See page 230

Bride! the word struck cold on his consciousness. She was engaged to his friend. She was sweeter than ever in the daylight and in that white frock—but she was engaged to his friend! He must not forget that again. He looked off silently into the rain. The girl gave a quick, sideways glance at his face, settled now into stern, quiet lines. A little tender look came into her eyes. Then she laughed lightly.

"You have not explained yet how you come to be here in this my native land."

She began pulling off her white gloves. Suddenly she stopped, startled by the look of unreasonable joy that flashed across his face. He bent toward her, his hand just touching hers.

"You're—you're not engaged to Keeton now?"

"Engaged to Reeves!" she faltered. "Why, I never was."

"But the ring? You wore one then and his—the little twisted heart thing. Oh, I—I know I've no right, but I—Champ! I beg your pardon," he ended with a sudden change of tone.

The same hot flush had dyed her face—the same half-frightened, half-shamed expression, but now she flung back her head with a little laugh.

"Oh, that ring! It was just a piece of Hallowe'en foolishness. You know it was Hallowe'en that night and Alice begged her mother's engagement ring. The other is mine—Reeves just got it once on a wager. You know we do all sorts of silly things on Hallowe'en. Nobody ever believes in them, but it's fun."

"But I don't understand—about the ring," he persisted dully.

"Haven't you ever heard that old Hallowe'en fiction? If you wear a ring on that night, that's once 'plighted a troth'—or some such nonsense—why, you're sure to meet your fate. The sum of existence on Hallowe'en is to 'meet your fate,' you know."

She leaned forward and peeped out between the vines.

"I believe the shower is over. Yes, there is a bit of blue. I think I'll go before the lady of the cushions returns and finds you entertaining a strange young woman on her veranda."

He was looking at her—her wide, dark eyes, her mouth with its little alluring droop, the strand of bright hair blown across her cheek. He couldn't seem to think of anything to say, but over and over the words sung themselves through his mind—"She isn't engaged to Keeton! She never was!"

She gave her dress a little shake and began drawing on her gloves. How lovely and unruffled and aloof she looked! How could he ever expect—

"Will you be in town long, Mr. Graham?" she was asking in a pleasant society tone. "We will be glad to see you out at the house some evening if you are."

"Yes—thank you—I may be here several days. May I come—tonight?"

The girl half smiled at the hesitating little ending. Her parasol slipped to the floor, and as he handed it to her, their eyes met—his, shining, questioning—hers full of a baffling friendliness.

"Yes, do," she said brightly. "Good-bye. Give my thanks to the lady of the cushions."

Center—C—17

BY MARY L. DICKERSON

I was alone in a strange city. That fact by itself was enough to make me rather blue. But in addition, it was Christmas eve, and I about five hundred miles away from the big family house party to which I had been looking forward for months.

A feeling of utter desolation swept over me as I paced aimlessly up and down the busy streets, in and out among the hurrying people. I felt that I must shake off the blue devils that assailed me, and turned for consolation into the broadly-opened doors of a theater close by.

A seat for that night? The clerk at the box office window shook his head at first, and then, seeing my look of deep disappointment, hesitated.

"You—you wouldn't mind sitting alone?" he asked.

I laughed rather bitterly. "It's the only way I can sit," I answered. "I am alone."

"Well, then," the clerk hesitated a bit, and handed me a check. "Center—C—17," he said, eyeing me closely, "right here," and he touched with his pencil-point a seat that stood indeed by itself. It and a great pillar seemed to fill in the space left at the large end of a V made by the regular rows of chairs. But the location seemed good, as far as I could tell by the chart, and I was turning away with a "Thank you for Center—C—17," when an exclamation arrested me.

Why I had repeated the seat number I do not know. It has always seemed to me that my guardian angel put the words into my mouth. Certain it is that they saved my life that night. But at the time I was startled,

rather amused, and a little annoyed at their effect. A slight, stoop-shouldered man with pale blue eyes had entered the office and stepped behind my dapper little clerk.

"Yeamans," he said sharply, "have you sold Center—C—17 to-night?"

I remember wondering at the time at the inflection he put upon the words. Why not that night as well as any other? And naturally I waited.

Yeamans looked sulky. "I have," he said, in a tone that implied "Mind your own business" in every note.

"But I have warned you—" began the other, when I started away. I had no mind to lose the last seat in the house. It was mine now, and I would hold it. But I puzzled a bit over the occurrence.

An hour later I stepped once more within the brilliant doors, joining the long line of men and women who were streaming in for their evening of fun. Beside the inner doorway stood a slight, stoop-shouldered man with curious pale blue eyes.

At sight of me he hastened forward and touched my sleeve. "You are the gentleman who has bought Center—C—17," he said rapidly. "I beg of you to accept a seat in the manager's box. I have made all arrangements."

Something in the assurance of his tones roused my temper.

"See here," I said sharply, "is there any one who has a better right to that seat than I?"

He turned a greenish pallor and stared at me.

"Yes—no—" he stammered. "It's not sold to any one else, if that's what you mean, but—"

"I don't care about any of your buts," I rejoined rather roughly; "the seat's mine, and I'll sit in it. I've no admiration for decorating boxes in solitary glory," and I pushed on through the door, anxious to see the chair that had caused so much turmoil. I had as yet no feeling of uneasiness, but somehow it was roused by the head usher. He looked twice at my seat coupon, though the rush of incomers was great.

"Center—C—17," he muttered. "I've been here for eight years, but that seat has never been sold before—on this night." Then to me, "Sure there's no mistake, sir?"

"No, why should there be?" I answered. "What's wrong with that seat, anyhow?"

"Oh, nothing, nothing. Here, Jim, show this gentleman to Center—C—17," and he passed on to the next party.

I felt that my enjoyment of the evening was almost spoiled already. The petty fussiness of the whole thing annoyed me. I was relieved to see the seat. It was an ordinary opera chair, standing by itself, close up against a great white pillar that did not impede sight or sound. In fact, the chair's peculiar position gave an extra amount of space to the occupant, which was agreeable to a man of my size.

The place impressed me so well that I decided the slight, stoop-shouldered man with the curious blue eyes had merely wanted to reserve that chair for a friend.

"Foiled for once," I muttered, as I disposed my hat and coat and settled back to enjoy the comedy on which the curtain was just rising.

In five minutes I had forgotten I was alone, forgotten I was disappointed and had been annoyed. I am very fond of the theater, and I

was watching a good play, well presented by competent actors.

In fact, I was so lost in the piece that at first, though I heard, I did not notice a faint clapping that came now and then at my elbow. Then suddenly there came a laugh—not loud, but so merry, so care-free and contagious, that no man living could have resisted it. With a start I realized that it came from a chair beside me. And I was sitting quite alone!

My eyes seemed frozen to the stage. My smile seemed frozen on my mouth. For a moment I stared stupidly, rigidly before me, physically unable to move a muscle. Then the light and warmth and human gaiety about me seemed to turn my horror into ridicule, and with an inward laugh at my own foolishness, I looked to the left, from whence that other laugh had come.

And then once more that strangeness crept over me, and there, in the midst of that happy, careless crowd, there in the center of a brilliant, well-filled theater, I felt my flesh creep and my muscles stiffen with horror.

For a woman was sitting beside me!

Her dress, of rich dark blue, swept across my feet. Her face, alive with life and warmth and color, was smiling toward the stage. Her sleeve brushed mine. Her long white hand rested almost upon my knee. I could even catch the perfume of a bunch of violets pinned loosely at her belt.

With a gasp I put out my hand to the right. There beside me was the solid pillar. I looked about me. There were the rows of laughing faces. There was the stage, crowded now with people.

There were the boxes, among them the empty one belonging to the manager showing dark and lonely, until—

was it my fancy or another trick of this strange delusion, that far back amongst its shadows I saw once more the face of the slight, stoop-shouldered man with the curious pale blue eyes?

The sight of him roused me. I shook myself, passed my hand across my eyes, and turned them resolutely towards the stage. I knew I was alone. The presence beside me had been a fiction of my brain. I could prove it, and I would. People might think it strange to see me groping outward with my hand, but—well, for my own peace of mind, I would risk it.

Out went my hand, confidently, firmly, and then shrank trembling back. For I had touched her! She was there—a warm, living woman, whose touch had sent a thrill through my finger tips as they lay a moment on hers.

I turned and looked. She was gazing at me, just a quiver of amusement under her curving lashes.

"What, here, in public, John?" she whispered, and I started. My name is John. But I had not meant to caress her.

Somehow, the excitement of it all—the mystery, and the terror—made me faint. I felt my head reel. I saw that one yawning, empty box swirl round me in a ring of blackness.

"Here," she breathed, almost in my ear, "you're faint—take this!" Her fingers, warm and lingering, lay on mine. Something was held against my lips, and then there came a crash, a cry, and I felt myself dragged rudely from my seat, and heard the stir of excited voices in my ears. I felt somehow that I was fainting. I tried to gather my wits, opened my eyes, and saw her once again—leaning toward me, her eyes strained wide apart, her lips set in a cruel, straight smile, her face no

longer tender nor lovely, but as wicked and as hard as any face I ever saw.

Then suddenly she seemed to try to call something to me—something I did not hear. I saw her fall back from me, stiffening strangely as she fell, and then I was swept out into the great sea of unconsciousness.

When I woke I was in my hotel room, in bed. The facts crowded back on me like those of a weird, half-forgotten dream. Then I opened my eyes, and shrank back, trembling. Beside me sat a slight, stoop-shouldered man, with curious pale blue eyes.

It was then all true? Or was I still in that strange dream? Another face, a doctor's, I knew, by the critical, professional glance it gave, looked at me.

"All right now?" he asked cheerily. "You weren't bad, you know. Just a fainting fit. Don't look at Lancey that way. He pulled you out of your seat—got you here—did everything for you. Take a drink of this, and forget you ever heard of such a thing as fainting."

"May he talk, doctor?" asked Lancey, in a low voice, as the doctor began packing up his traps. "Talk? Certainly. Till midnight—or morning. It's the former now. Don't see what put you in such a fluke, Lancey. Well, I'm off now. Take care of him."

And the doctor hustled from the room.

Lancey leaned over me, a strained, eager expression in his eyes. "Tell me what you saw?" he half pleaded, half commanded.

Slowly, fitting the memories together in my brain, I repeated it all.

"And you saw nothing—heard nothing—else?"

"No."

He leaned back, a disappointed look in his eyes.

"Why?" I questioned. Then, more sharply, pulling myself up on my pillows, "I think I have a right to know what all this means. You must know something. Why did you warn me? What is wrong with that seat?"

He shook his head slowly. "You know almost as much as I. But I owe you the rest.

"It happened twelve years ago, when I was head usher in this very theater. I'm assistant manager now. The theater was arranged a little differently then, and there were two seats in the space you occupied last night. On Christmas eve, in the midst of my rush of work, I stopped long enough to notice a couple who took those seats. The woman was the loveliest I ever saw. Dark, regal—there's no use wasting words. You've seen her. And the man was as insignificant a wretch as I ever care to see. Little and sniveling and mean, outside and in. You could tell it at a glance. Why they were together I couldn't understand. They didn't fit, I knew. But I forgot them, till near the close of the first act—about the time you saw her to-night. Then there came a stir from that part of the house. A gentleman was fainting. I ran down with water. He was lying back, dead white, and gasping, just as you did, sir, to-night. And over him I saw the face of a fiend. She was trying to say something, trying to call to him through the mists that were over them both. For, as I looked, she fell back too, and when we carried them out, they both were dead.

"Trace them? We never could. The police found they had come in on a train that night. They had gone to no hotel. She carried a

handbag. In it was a small revolver, some money, and a bottle—a bottle whose taste, though almost imperceptible, was, the chemists said, a powerful poison. Just what, they could not tell. There was so little left. Only a trace. Those who sat by her said she had offered the little bottle to the man at first, then touched it to her own lips, and put it back. Who they were we never knew. We do not know to-day. Or what their story."

"But why did you try to prevent my buying that seat?" I asked curiously.

"Because two other men have died there, both on Christmas eve," and Lancey's eyes had a strange, baffled look.

"The next year we sold those seats to two men. One was ill and stayed at home. What would have happened to him I cannot say. The other fainted strangely near the close of the second act, and was carried out—dead.

"The coincidence was too strange to pass. We remodeled the theater that year. We put in the one seat instead of the two. On Christmas eve we sold it with fear and trembling, and watched the man who took it. Near the close of the second act he started to his feet, made as if to run up the aisle, fighting away an intangible something from his face, and then fell dead at my feet. Autopsies? They both died of heart failure, the doctors said. There was nothing else to say. But that seat has never been sold since on Christmas eve. And rarely on any other night. We had a new clerk to-day, who did not know. I had warned him, without an explanation. An explanation seemed impossible. We don't believe in haunted things, these days. But I tried to keep you from the seat, and when you went I

watched you. I caught you before you had fainted. I dragged you out rather roughly, I fear. But I felt I must get you away soon—soon. I felt I must save you. I wanted to save your life, of course, and I wanted to know what it was—what you saw. But you can explain no more than I."

"No." I shook my head, and he left me.

The mystery was never cleared. Nor was another—officially. For

the next night that theater was burned to the ground after the play was over and every one, even the watchman, out of danger. No one ever knew how the fire caught. I imagine I could guess. You can't give warnings against ghosts these days. But you can eliminate the danger. The curious pale blue eyes of the slight, stoop-shouldered man had looked three times on dead men taken from that chair. I was the last occupant of Center—C—17.

The Behavior of the Ideal

BY E. F. STEARNS

They had crossed together on one of the Cunard boats. They had never met, formally or otherwise. They had never spoken, even on shipboard, where such things are sometimes tolerated.

He knew her name to be Leslie Alton, her home Philadelphia; he gave full, if astonished, credit to the Quaker City for producing a thing so charming. She was aware that on the passenger list he appeared as John J. Hubbard. She liked "John J. Hubbard" immensely; it seemed so quietly strong and simple, so entirely harmonious with the outward manifestations of its owner's personality. That was the extent of their acquaintance.

For this peculiar condition, two reasons obtained. John J. held aloof and feared, as only a big man knows how to fear, the extremely austere quality that seemed to go with Miss Alton's beauty. Leslie, on the other hand, possibly scenting the aloofness and certainly desiring to mask a satisfied admiration engendered by finding in the physical John J., at least, a hitherto unen-

countered Ideal, dared nothing less than austerity. Traveling homeward, forsaken by an aunt who appeared to have taken permanent root in London, Leslie had discovered that if one be young and proper and alone save for a maid, one shies frightfully at cultivating even Ideals.

When the customs agony had been passed and one electric cab deposited Miss Alton at the side of New York's most exclusive hostelry, while another electric cab deposited John J. Hubbard at the front—so that they met suddenly in the office—she experienced a fluttering gratification. The exclusiveness of the place gave a certain vindicating stamp of quality to the Ideal.

Hungry for the sight of anything and everything wholesomely American, Leslie descended to the general dining-room next morning for breakfast. The most wholesome object visible was John J. Hubbard, by the window. He caught her eye abruptly, half inclined his head; then, for the austerity had not yet departed, suddenly felt his unut-



"He knew her name to be Leslie Alton."

terable presumption, reddened miserably and gazed elsewhere. The blush pleased Leslie hugely; she had called it into being. With increased good humor she was led to a table, and anon sought to repeat the diversion. John J. was not thus to be trapped.

Throughout a morning's revel in

plain United States—around the Park, up and down Sixth Avenue, up and down Fifth Avenue—that blush recurred periodically to Miss Alton, and on each occasion evoked a slight smile. Simple, sensitive John J. Hubbard! At five Leslie would leave for Philadelphia; between lunch and train time she almost scheduled a flirtation with Mr. Hubbard.

But at the hotel her mind came rapidly to more serious affairs.

It was in the office that she perceived the brawny and immaculate John J. once more. Several men stood about him, their faces obviously questioning and unfriendly and just a trifle grim. One of them, at the very moment, had unostentatiously turned back his lapel, to reveal the little badge which proclaimed him house detective! Something unusual was well under way. Leslie paused; involuntarily, curiosity edged her toward the group.

The reason for the gathering developed quickly. Some softly spoken words here and there detached themselves and filtered into her brain. "Fine piece of work," in a sarcastic tone.

"Good engraving, fast enough;" this from the senior clerk, who stared at a twenty-dollar gold note. "Yes, sir, he insisted on it and refused anything else," from the head waiter. And:

"You see, sir, I have no choice," said the house detective, firmly. "Your appearance tallies—"

"Blast my description!" contrib-

uted the angrily quivering bass of John J. "I tell you, it's all the American money I have. Give me a chance to change some of this English stuff, and—"

"Then you didn't try the very same game at the Holland House yesterday morning, eh?" came quickly.

"No, I did not! And let me warn you—" Mr. Hubbard was growing emphatic.

"Now, now, now, sir!" The soft-voiced sleuth spoke again. "You see my position. I am here to look after just such things, of course. I know, sir, that you are not going to make any trouble about this. We'll just step quietly around—"

Leslie gasped. The Ideal under arrest, and for circulating counterfeit money at that! Then she frowned. As if he could be capable of it! A vague, but terribly strong, desire to rescue him swept over Leslie, and casting about hurriedly, she hit upon the means with fatal facility.

Far back, in one of the open private offices, sat an elderly person of authority. Leslie knew him; he knew Leslie and all the Alton family from years of transient visits. Leslie, with sharpened senses, became aware that the Alton patronage was worth something to the house. The path was clear! One quick word to Authority, then precipitate flight; and John J. Hubbard's way should be smoothed.

"Mr. Chambers! Mr. Chambers!" called Miss Alton, venturing into the forbidden precincts.

Authority arose, bowed a white head and smiled with affection.

"Really! Are you with us again, Miss Alton? How—"

"Mr. Chambers—out there—is a gentleman, in a little trouble, I think."

"I—eh? I beg pardon, Miss

Alton?" Authority's hearing was far from the best.

"A—a—why, they are accusing him of passing counterfeit money."

"Really! Really! I didn't know of this. Some one you're acquainted with, Miss Alton?"

"Why—of course. He is my—" unwonted excitement had almost brought out that word Ideal—"he is—er—Mr. Hubbard, you know."

Authority started violently.

"Your husband! But bless me, Miss Alton! I had no idea that you'd been married! Take a chair, my dear lady, I beg of you. I'll attend to this matter at once."

He was headed for the outer offices.

"But—he isn't my—" Miss Alton cried, in horror.

"Now, my very dear lady!" Authority called back, protestingly. "Not another word—I insist on it! Be quite calm, madam, quite calm. In just one minute I shall adjust everything—believe me, madam, everything!"

And he was gone—gone with the fiendish impression that John J. Hubbard was the wedded husband of Miss Alton!

Flight—mad flight—was the only course. Leslie, having gathered her shocked senses, followed by gathering her skirts and literally dashing out of the little ground-glass room.

Then she stopped, petrified. The sense-gathering process must have consumed many seconds; the group—an apologetic group, with a bewildered John J. as its central figure—was just outside the enclosure. Escape had been fairly cut off.

Wide-eyed and terror-stricken, Leslie waited; and gradually some degree of composure returned. The predicament was more than embarrassing, but it could be explained away

when the momentary excitement had passed. It could be made clear to Authority that he had erred; for the rest, another train for Philadelphia left at three.

One by one, the group evanesced. Authority and Mr. Hubbard stood alone. Mustering some assurance, Leslie stepped daintily forward to meet Authority's ingratiating smile.

"There, my dear madam!" said Mr. Chambers. "Everything is quite, *quite* all right, I assure you. Most unfortunate—I cannot find apologies for the occurrence, indeed—but here, safe and sound and free from suspicion is your husband, my dear lady! Ha! Ha!" Which last was the genial laugh of an old acquaintance.

John J. seemed to be moistening his lips. With a mighty effort, Leslie dimpled.

"Well, you see, Mr. Chambers, you—"

"Leslie Alton! *Your husband!*"

Leslie Alton jumped and, mechanically, turned a scared countenance down the corridor. That voice! Was there another like it? Polly Brandreth—prattling, chattering, iniquitous Polly Brandreth! Polly Brandreth of Philadelphia and her own people!

Some one squeezed her hand frantically; it was indeed Mrs. Brandreth, come out of the dining-room, trailed by faithful Bobby and Bobby's inseparable, Jimmy Hewes! And all, all of them from home!

"Leslie! You little wretch! You—married! And not a soul knew of it! Not a single soul heard one single word! Why—"

"Polly, dear—you see, Polly," Leslie groped blindly for words. "We're not—that is, I—"

"Oho! We're very much confused, are we? We never expected

to be caught? Bobby dear—Mr. Hewes. Come here this minute. View the quaking culprits! Of all things in the world—our Leslie with a husband! Mr. ——"

She paused questioningly. Leslie was beyond speech. John J. gulped and said thickly:

"My name is Hubbard."

"Mr. Hewes, Bobby—allow me to present you to—Mrs. Hubbard!" Polly's softly gurgling laugh was filled to the brim with pure enjoyment. She rattled on: "Mr. Hubbard, we don't understand it at all. But you've married the very dearest girl in the world. And we congratulate you both from the bottom of our hearts, don't we, Bobby? And now tell us, Mr. Hubbard. Leslie isn't equal to it. Tell us all—everything—about it! When and where and how were you married? Why the secrecy?"

On the spot Miss Alton registered a vow; never, never again, to her dying day, would she own an intimate friend. Her eyes were fixed on Hubbard with a stare almost hypnotic in its intensity. It was dreadful, awful; but he would save the day now. He had the opening to explain—what he didn't understand in the slightest.

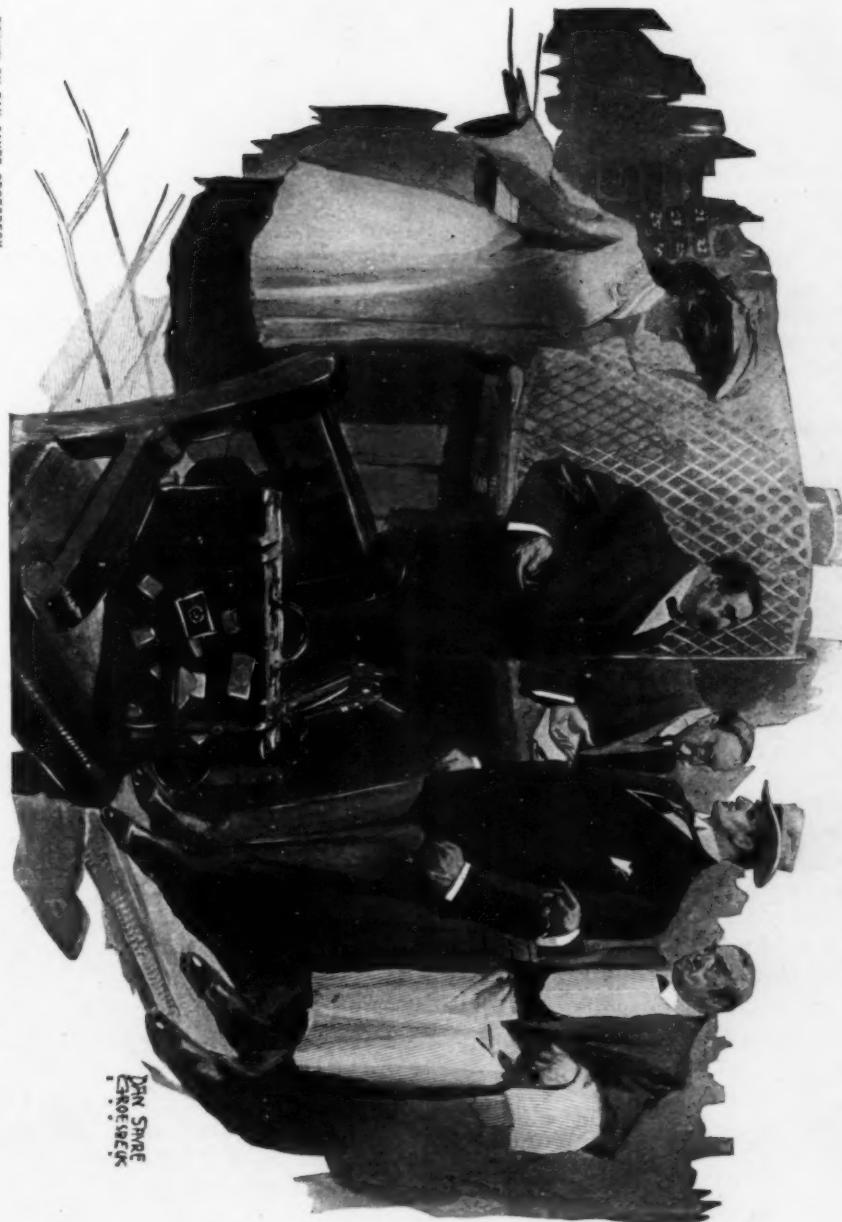
But the mind of Hubbard was far from collected, save on one point. For some strange reason, his chilly divinity of the steamer seemed to have claimed him. Clearly, whatever the motive, his part was but to back the lie.

"In London!" he said, with commendable firmness. And Leslie caught her uncertain breath and sank weakly back against the desk.

"London! Fancy!" chirped Polly. Then, with her charmingly direct attack of the to-be-discovered: "You're not an Englishman, Mr. Hubbard?"

DRAWN BY DAN SAVRE GROESBECK

"You see, sir, I have no choice," said the house detective firmly."



"I am from Chicago."

"I might have known it. I do adore Chicago people. We're all going to like you immensely, aren't we, Bobby?"

Bobby's slow smile seemed to confirm the prophecy.

"And how long are you to be here? What are you going to do this afternoon?"

"Why—we—I leave town at three," Leslie contrived.

"Three! Fudge! Nothing of the sort, my dear. If that's all you and your estimable better half have on hand, you're going with us!"

"Oh—no!"

"Oh, but you are!"

"But—you see—er—Leslie wished to leave—" Hubbard was hazarding bravely.

"Aha! Leslie's trying to rule you at this early stage! Don't allow it, Mr. Hubbard. She's perfectly incorrigible when it comes to running things. Now tell her that you've decided that she's to accompany us. Do, Mr. Hubbard, please. I must see Leslie bossed around a little."

"Well—er—perhaps—" between the insistence of pretty Mrs. Brandreth and the expression of white appeal on Miss Alton's countenance, Hubbard's smile was growing strained.

"Why, Mr. Hubbard! Haven't you the authority to say 'Come' and make her come? But of course she's coming—both of you, and now, too."

"Where, Polly?" murmured the wretched Leslie.

"Morris Park."

"Oh—the races."

"Of course. But come, come, come! We're late as it is. Have you your things? Yes. Do you wish to bring glasses, Mr. Hubbard? No? Then let's run along."

Leslie was conscious that Hubbard had been led away by Mrs. Brand-

reth, she herself loitering on uncertainly between Bobby and Hewes. As from a vast distance, the voice of Polly floated back.

"Yes, Mr. Hewes came up in his motor. We'll all fit in somewhere or other. Oh, no; not all the way to the track. We're to meet some friends up-town and drive the rest of the way—four-in-hand, you know."

"Who—Polly?" asked Miss Alton, fearfully.

"Cartwright's drag, my dear. You know the crowd—most of them."

"Oh—I don't think we'd better!"

"Nonsense, my dear," said Polly, placidly. "Jump in, Mr. Hubbard. You next, Leslie. Jimmy can sit in front."

A direful bumm-bumm-bumm-bumm set a-tremble the seats beneath them. Warningly, the horn tooted at a passing hansom; then the car swung to the rear of the vehicle and headed up-town. They were indeed embarked for an afternoon of pleasure!

Block after block reeled away behind them. Leslie was silent, save when the limits of silence were reached, now and then, and in sheer desperation she managed a remark and a smile. Polly chattered on unceasingly, too absorbed with the romance of the occasion and the meeting with Miss Alton to give great attention to that young lady's abnormal mood.

Hubbard, at the other side, strove his hardest to be natural, and for a time he succeeded. His conscience was clear. He had been thrust into a bewildering, but not altogether unpleasant role; for Leslie's sake, his plain duty lay in maintaining the part.

But after a while it grew upon Mr. Hubbard that something else was amiss. Even his qualified enjoyment of the adventure began to flag;

he perceived that Miss Alton was not altogether comfortable, and he wondered. Had he been too noncommittal? Hadn't he gone sufficiently into details? Would it improve matters now to break in and enlarge upon the assumed ceremony in London? Hubbard dared not; indeed, he hardly dared to speak. Slowly but surely, and to Mrs. Brandreth's mild astonishment, John J., too, relapsed into dead silence.

Then came the next awful clap.

Leslie and Hubbard awoke suddenly from their respective meditations to a chorus of voices.

Above them loomed a drag. There was Cartwright, on the box. Leslie was well acquainted with Cartwright, and Mrs. Cartwright and Cartwright's sister and the Hazens and Mr. Fayne and Mr. Ainsworth and Mr. Marshall and the Blythe girls. New York people and Philadelphia people—she knew every one; and now she was facing them all beside Hubbard!

Ah, it was too, too hideous—the outstretched palms, the little screams of astonishment, the light chaffing, the questions, the ejaculations, the congratulations, the airy comments that passed between one and another of those merciless familiars.

When the early commotion had subsided, the drag was moving. How thoughtfully had they placed the bridal pair on the rear seat—alone, the better to enjoy each other's society!

Leslie was dumb, staring fixedly ahead, save when a suddenly turned head brought forth that painful smile. Hubbard, too, spent a long time of silence; finally, it came near to being unbearable, and he took matters in hand in an attempt to fathom some of the riddles.

"Miss Alton," he said softly, "you——"

"*Mr. Hubbard!*" replied Miss Alton, "I shall be extremely grateful if you will refrain from addressing me!"

John J.'s teeth met with a startled click. He obeyed, speculating fruitlessly and miserably. But it was the will of the lady and he submitted.

Queer, nightmare things occurred that afternoon. There was a huge track—crowds—colors—drags—automobiles. At times, horses appeared and raced frantically around the track. The people on the drag stood erect and held field-glasses to their eyes and cheered and waved things.

Once, something or other was done by some particular horse. The men on the drag went mad, shouting, cheering, gesticulating wildly. Not so John J. Hubbard. Gloomy and unenthusiastic he sat, cowed by the frigid presence at his side, invulnerable to all emotion save curiosity. They took to staring at him in surprise. And:

"You might wake up and try at least to act like a human being!" Miss Alton remarked, in a tart undertone.

Thereafter he was track mania incarnate. Others cheering, he filled his wide lungs and drowned them; when they traded spicy comments on the performance he joined in the conversation with uncanny sprightliness; did they gesticulate, he outdid them, until beads of perspiration were upon him, even in the crisp spring air. He was only a poor, simple creature, striving his hardest to do the best thing, yearning with all his soul to perform whatever mysterious feat might be expected of him; and if such a thing were possible, Leslie might have been caught, once or twice, smiling at his broad back.

In the fullness of time it came to an end. The crowds in the field surged, straggling lines of runners trailed away toward the electric cars, the horns of the motors croaked hoarsely. The drag was in motion once more, for the return trip.

They were both more calm, Leslie with the quiet mien that may succeed desperation, Hubbard stern in the resolve to watch for cues and do his duty—and die, if need be, knowing that he could have done no more.

His final coup came when they drew up at last at Cartwright's.

Leslie, half hopelessly, had been meditating a stroke of her own. They were all friends—perhaps the affair might be thrown into the light of a practical joke, even now. Anaemic inspiration—and yet, she might take heart and tell the truth, and then—well, then they would look things and perhaps they would laugh, if she herself succeeded in laughing long enough. And if she could muster a sufficiently brazen air and refrain from blushing! She drew a long breath; she was almost ready for the plunge.

"But really that is impossible," Hubbard was saying, in a firm, father-of-the-family manner. "We must catch the nine o'clock train from Jersey City."

"What is—impossible?" inquired Miss Alton.

"Mrs. Brandreth suggested that we dine with them—darling," smiled the Ideal, dwelling complacently on the last word.

"Oh, no! We—we—we couldn't do that, Polly!" said a hurried, broken voice.

"Well—then Mr. Hewes will take you back—won't you, Jimmy? And, Leslie," Polly Brandreth's brow contracted anxiously, "you take an hour's rest before you start.

Mind me! You're not at all yourself this afternoon. Ah, these absorbed bridal couples!"

The absorbed couple rode back to the hotel in such state that Mr. Hewes fell to shaping theories as he tended the wheel. There was a remarkably dreary constraint about the pair. Perhaps it was money? No, it couldn't be. Better call it simple matrimonialitis. Mr. Hewes thanked God for his bachelordom.

At the door, Leslie disappeared toward the elevators as a fresh-launched shaft of lightning. Hubbard, having exchanged a few perfunctory partings with Mr. Hewes, walked straight—although he was not a tippling man—to the bar; and there for half an hour he stared at his reflection in the mirror and endeavored with some success to pour oil on the lashing waves of his mental sea.

There, too, he reached a conclusion; and having reached it, betook himself to the third floor, where with the aid of a chambermaid he located the apartments of Miss Alton.

It was a little suite, and Leslie's maid had admitted him ere that young person had arisen from a tear-stained pillow in the adjoining room to test the virtue of cold water on inflamed eyes.

Minute after minute, Hubbard sat there, nervous but resolute, twiddling his thumbs; and when that palled, drumming out light opera on the arm of his chair.

Leslie entered with chin hard set.

"You wish to see me?"

"Oh, I say, Miss Alton! You've been crying!" exclaimed Hubbard, with remorse and much tact.

"Does that concern you, Mr. Hubbard?"

"Eh—yes. It—it's my fault!"

"It is indeed your fault."

She sank wearily into an armchair. Hubbard walked up and down.

"I—by Jove! I don't know what to say, Miss Alton!" he cried, miserably.

"That is quite readily understood."

"Why—why, of course I'm to blame, but I didn't catch the drift of matters, you know. I can't understand now—"

"Oh, I saw you in difficulties—"

"Eh? With that wretched counterfeit?"

"Yes. I felt sure, Mr. Hubbard—why, that you were wrongfully suspected, of course. I told Mr. Chambers that there must be a mistake, and he, I suppose—he's very hard of hearing—he mistook Hubbard for—for—"

"What! Not husband?"

"Yes!" The word seemed bitten off.

John J. Hubbard permitted himself to laugh.

"Then that's all easily enough straightened out!" he cried.

"Really? How?"

"Why, to-night I shall simply visit those good people



DAN SAYRE
GORESBECK
1904

"Thereafter he was track mania incarnate."

who carried us off this afternoon—and explain, of course."

"And what do you intend to tell them?"

"The truth—what else?"

"After stating in that charmingly explicit way that we were—married in London!"

"By Jove! I'd forgotten that."

"I had not, you see."

"Well—I had," repeated Hubbard, lamely. "But don't you see, Miss Alton, I supposed of course that for some purpose you had told them—"

"In—deed?"

Hubbard winced wretchedly.

"Well—I didn't mean that, of course," he hurried on, not quite aware of what "that" signified. "But—"

"Well, Mr. Hubbard?" said Leslie, refined in torture.

Hubbard groaned.

"What a blundering ass I am! How you must detest the very sight of me!"

"I do."

"I'll leave you, Miss Alton. It—it seems to be all I can do."

"One moment. Do you mean permanently?"

"Yes!" It was a happy thought. "Of course. I'd meant to stay a week or two, but I'll clear out for Chicago to-night."

"And not one of those people whom you met to-day will know where you've gone—without a word! And I, Mr. Hubbard, will be left to explain alone why I have been thus suddenly deserted! Is that your splendid intention?"

"My—my dear Miss Alton! I—oh, Lord! I suppose I didn't see it in that light!"

"You seem to see things in extremely variable lights."

Hubbard took up his tramp once more.

"But you don't live in New York!" he exclaimed presently.

"True—neither does Polly Brandreth nor Mr. and Mrs. Hazen nor those two Blythe girls—and how Jessie did smile over that *darling* of yours! Unhappily, they are all Philadelphians, Mr. Hubbard. This time next week every one who ever laid eyes on me will have had this afternoon retailed to them, with variations as to your peculiar moods, I presume. I shall enjoy it all immensely!"

"It's—oh, it's simply awful!" said Mr. Hubbard.

"My side, at least. You, however, being resolved to leave town this evening—"

"Do you imagine for one moment that I'm going to run away like that and leave you to explain everything? I won't do it!"

"I fail to see what else you are going to do. Remain here and make matters worse?"

She regarded hapless John J. Hubbard with a calm, quizzical stare. The unfortunate walked back and forth and back and forth, until it seemed that he must have worn a trail across the floor. His brow was seamed with a hundred hard-drawn wrinkles, his complexion purple. Of a sudden, however, he turned swiftly and went down upon his knees before Leslie.

"Miss Alton!" he cried, spasmodically. "I'm a—a decent sort of a chap, I hope—"

Miss Alton's eyebrows arched.

"Oh, I mean that I'm—all right, you know—not a pauper, and all that sort of thing—nor much that I shouldn't be. And I want to tell you—I've got to tell you that I've been head over ears in love with you, since the day the vessel sailed. Leslie—won't you take me on faith and—marry me? It—why, it would

smooth out everything—Leslie."

"Not if you were the last man in creation!" said Leslie, placidly, facing him unflinchingly.

"But I do love you! I—"

"And your sudden affection is most flattering. It is very painful indeed to repulse so remarkably convenient, a passion is it not? May I arise, Mr. Hubbard?"

"But—oh, Leslie! Dear, dear Leslie! If you'd only forget all the rest and just believe—that!"

He was still upon his knees. His

strong face was very red and very miserable, his clear eyes clouded with trouble, yet alight behind the trouble with a wonderful, illuminating something, as he gazed pleadingly.

Suddenly a smile broke through the cloud that her face had borne, a smile at first quizzical, then mirthful, then tender.

"Don't be so wretched," she said, "I began it, and you stood by me loyally. If—if—you're sure you're in earnest now, perhaps—Are you sure?"

The Face in the Watch

BY FRANK N. STRATTON

To the man clinging desperately to the face of the cliff, the slipping of either foot, the yielding of the slender vine gripped in his brawny hands, meant death at the bottom of the deep cañon into which his stumbling horse had plunged.

The scream of a prowling puma cut through the sullen roar of the river far below; from the brink of the cliff above, a lone and predatory wolf grinned downward, squatted on his lank haunches, and howled hideously; a noisome sable bird, green and inquisitive of eye, swept upward from the depths, snapping his hooked beak and squawking in eager anticipation.

The man shuddered, and little crumbs of dirt rolled from the roots of the vine. He forced the toes of his boots farther into the shallow niche; with one hand he loosened the buckle of his heavy belt, and it writhed, weapon-laden, downward like a serpent. A vine root snapped with almost inaudible sound; to the ears of the despairing man it sounded like a rifle-shot. He glanced upward, a look of stupefaction crept over his

pallid face, and he muttered a startled imprecation.

Hanging over the brink of the cliff, framed in long and unkempt hair, was the face of a man—a face with thin, malevolent lips, and cruel, crafty eyes under sullen brows.

"Steady, stranger!" the face spoke sharply. "When the rope strikes you, grab it!"

The swish of a lasso, a quick scramble that sent a hail of stones into the abyss, the iron grip of a downward-reaching hand, and the rescued man lay panting on the narrow trail that wormed around the peak.

From his height of six-feet-two the rescuer looked down on him and smiled grimly as he coiled the rope about the saddle-horn.

"Pretty close call," he remarked.

"You'll never know how close till you've been there," the shorter man panted.

"It's never safe to hurry a tired horse on a trail like this. Where were you going?"

"Been on a hunting trip. Hurryin' back home. Took a short cut."

"And a high dive," chuckled the other. "Come on, I'm going your way—for a mile or so."

He swung to the horse's back, and the short man followed, gazing expectantly up the trail. Suddenly the man on the horse halted and slid from the saddle. Winding among the foot-hills far below, three horsemen were approaching. The tall man, leading his horse, turned from the trail into a wild ravine.

"I've a bite to eat up here," he said, "and maybe I can fit you out with a gun."

The other hesitated, his face still turned toward the distant horsemen. The tall man drew a Winchester from the saddle.

"Coming?" he asked, sharply.

His companion waved a hand upward, as if in assent, turned and followed up the ravine, his head bent in meditation.

An hour's laborious journey brought them to a rude shack. The man leading the horse tossed the bridle reins over a projecting peg, leaned the Winchester against the side of the shack and strode through the door.

"Hands up!" cried the voice of his guest.

He wheeled slowly, hands in air, and looked into the exultant face that pressed the stock of the Winchester.

"I'm Barton, of Truitt's Rangers," snapped the short man. "Can't be taken alive, eh? I'll show you! No foolishness now—I know your record!"

"If you know my record," the tall man said calmly, a pleading note in his low voice, "you know that when I broke jail, ten years ago, it was to escape conviction by the powerful friends of the real criminal. You know what killed my wife, and sent my child—God knows where! And

you know that, outlaw though I am, I have never taken life except to escape from officers who have dogged me from state to state. Are you going, now, to take me back—to the gallows—when you owe your own life to me?"

"Sure! I need th' reward. Give me that gun."

A sneering smile parted the malevolent lips; the upraised hands dropped; the revolver leaped from its hanger and covered Barton, of Truitt's Rangers, while the Winchester snapped fruitlessly.

"You lose!" the tall man hissed. "Never suspected you till I saw those fellows in the foot-hills. Emptied the magazine to try you out. Now, you sit on that bench—that's right. Any of your friends south of us?"

"That's for you to find out," the ranger answered defiantly.

"I'll give you two minutes to answer."

"Make it one—and I'll hold th' watch," the ranger growled.

He drew a gold watch from his fob and flipped it open.

"Time's up," he said presently. "Let her go!"

The muzzle of the revolver rose slowly, and the ranger looked straight into it with unwavering eyes. The tall man held out his left hand.

"Give me the watch," he said. "I'll time you—and I'll break your nerve."

The ranger tossed the watch into the open hand, and the outlaw raised it to his face. Then he started back, his eyes dilating, his face twitching convulsively.

"The picture!" he exclaimed hoarsely. "Where did you get it?"

The other stared at him blankly; then his sullen face cleared; a subtle smile played about his lips.

"Th' picter in th' watch? It's my daughter."

"You lie!" the outlaw cried fiercely.

Again the odd smile flashed over the ranger's face.

"That's what I call her," he said. "I took her, ten year ago, a waif from th' Denver streets. She's twelve now."

"Her name?" The outlaw's voice was metallic in its intensity; his face almost touched that of the ranger's.

"Never found out. She could just lisp her first name—Cicely."

The chin of the outlaw slowly sank upon his heaving chest.

"She's well, and happy—eh, ranger?" he murmured.

"Ain't a happier, livelier kid in th' world, I reckon."

"And you're bringing her up properly—educating her?"

"Sure! Mighty proud of that gal, we are; she's all we've got."

The horse outside the door whinnied, and the outlaw whirled toward him. The animal's muzzle pointed down the ravine; his upraised ears twitched expectantly. The tall man dropped the watch into his pocket, pushed the revolver into its hanger,

picked up the Winchester and hastily filled its magazine. Half crouching, he stepped swiftly to the door. From far down the darkening ravine came the faint neigh of a horse, ending abruptly, as if a hand had suddenly gripped the nostrils.

"Blunderers!" the outlaw muttered. "When they arrive I'll be gone, over trails they can't follow in the dark."

He slipped the bridle-reins from the peg, and when he turned toward the ranger there were tears in his crafty eyes.

"Barton, of Truitt's Rangers," he said, brokenly, "God bless you! Take good care of my—of Cicely. Sometime, perhaps, I'll—"

He choked, leaped into the saddle and disappeared among the evening shadows of the great rocks.

The ranger rose to his feet, walked weakly to the door, and wiped the beads of sweat from his bronzed face.

"Gosh!" he soliloquized, softly. "So that's th' daddy of Cap Truitt's Cicely! Lucky I borrowed Truitt's watch. It'll cost me a hundred, I reckon—but it's dirt cheap at that!"

The Way It Happened

BY EMMA LEE WALTON

Jimmie Coxe paused in amazement and gazed across the street at a young woman who stood on the top step of a low porch and beckoned to him. She was dressed in light blue and had on neither hat nor coat, which was rather remarkable on such a nipping afternoon, and she seemed rather nervous and unduly excited. Possibly the house was on fire. He looked up the street for fire-engines, located the alarm-

box and looked back at the girl. There! she was beckoning frantically again, so there was nothing for it but to cross over and find out what the row was. It was unpleasant, crossing through all the muddy snow, but he was on his way to his sister's to dinner, where a new shine was not impossible. He raised his hat mechanically as he reached the other side, and enquired if his services were needed. As he spoke

he looked at her and was conscious of keen regret at his deliberation. If he had known—

"You are the slowest knight-errant I ever saw," she said impatiently. "Can't you see I'm almost frozen?"

Jimmie was eminently practical. "Then why don't you go into the house?" he asked, realizing at the same moment that her eyes were large and brown.

"Go into the house?" she repeated scornfully. "I can't! I ran out to mail a letter, and shut my dress in the door. You don't suppose I'd be goose enough to freeze here if I could get in, do you?"

"Ring the bell."

"As if I hadn't exhausted the batteries an hour ago! Besides—"

"Besides what?"

She looked at him critically.

"I don't know that I am safe in telling you," she said after a moment's hesitation. "But everybody's gone out to dinner somewhere."

"And left you alone?"

"I was due at a dinner at two," she said with a short laugh, "and here I am. It'll be dark before long."

"Why didn't you call for help?"

"Really!" she said. "I am so glad I can rely on a wise, masculine mind! As if I hadn't thought of that! I've called loud enough to bring the police patrol and the fire department without results. It is a great protection, this living in a city. One feels so safe."

He pondered a moment.

"How about the windows?"

"All locked. I saw to it myself a while ago. They're afraid of burglars here."

"I'll get a locksmith."

"They'll be closed," she said wearily. "It's New Year's Day, you know."

He slipped off his overcoat.

"What are you going to do?"

"Put this on you," he answered, suiting the action to the word. "I don't dare offer my hat, but I have a substitute."

His deft fingers fashioned a little cap out of his handkerchief, by means of knots at the corners, and put it over her mussed and wind-blown hair to excellent effect.

"I'm sorry I was cross," she said meekly, mollified by the kindly warmth of the overcoat. "But I've been standing here so long—my dress won't even let me sit down on the step—and I was awfully chilled and disappointed. Think of that dinner!"

Jimmie smiled to himself, realizing that his sister was, in all probability, gazing down the street looking for him at that very moment.

"You'll find some peanuts in my left-hand pocket," he said cheerily. "That'll make you forget the fun you're missing, maybe."

She plunged her hand down into the pocket gratefully, and drew out a handful of peanuts, which they cracked and ate for some minutes in silence.

"Do you believe that what you do the first of January you'll do every day for a month?" she asked laughingly. "I don't care to freeze for thirty days."

"No," he said boldly. "I wish I did."

"Aren't you going to think up anything to help me?" she asked hastily. "You were the first person that had come in sight since I closed the door, but I wish I had waited a little longer."

He threw some shells over the porch railing.

"I'm going to rout out a locksmith and get a key. They must live somewhere," he said. "What's the matter?"



DRAWN BY E. A. NELSON

"Then why don't you go into the house?" he asked."

She laughed resignedly. "Nothing. Just snow in my slipper."

"I'll be back in a jiffy, for I'll run every step of the way. You won't mind being alone?"

"Oh, no," she said with a sigh, "I'm ever and ever so much obliged to you. You are very kind."

He hurried quickly down the steps and up the street towards the business district of the smaller up-town stores, in the hope of finding some one who might have been belated in getting away from his shop. There might be at least one man, living over his place of business, who would be willing to desert the bosom of his family for half an hour and a compensation.

The druggist on the corner told him of a man whose store was two blocks north and one east, so he made haste to follow up the clue and find him. The store was there, but closed, and a frowzy woman upstairs called to him from the window, when his knocking became too persistent, to say that the gentleman had gone to a funeral and she didn't know when he'd be back. Good heavens, no, she didn't know and didn't care where there was another! The only thing that mattered was that he must not knock again and wake the baby. And she slammed the window down.

Visions of his sister and the cold dinner made his resolution waver a bit, but he remembered a pair of wistful brown eyes and tried again at an address he found in the drug-store directory of two years before. This man had moved down-town, but his third cousin, who answered Jimmie's ring, upon receipt of a deposit, lent him a handy tool and showed him how to operate it successfully upon the most obstinate lock. The man regretted that, as a good member of the union, he was

unable to accompany him and use it himself. Jimmie thanked him hurriedly, jumped on a passing car, and was soon back at the ill-natured door again. He had a dreadful feeling that she would be gone, rescued by some one else before he could get back, but as he peered through the gathering dusk he caught a glimpse of his overcoat huddled miserably against the outside door and he felt an odd sense of relief and pleasure.

"I never saw such a dead place in all my life," she said. "I have screamed and called and whistled, to say nothing of pounding the door, but nobody has come near me in all this time. You didn't find him? Is that the best you could do?"

"What jimmy has done, Jimmie can do," he said cheerily. "I'll have it open now in just a jiffy—too soon. You won't mind if I scratch the door a bit, I hope?"

"Not a mite," she answered miserably. "I am so tired I don't care about anything, now. Besides, I don't own the door. Will that take a long time?"

"You forget when you hurry me that I'll have to go as soon as it does open, and maybe I'll never see you again."

"You give up easily. Besides," suddenly haughty again, "I'd like to know what difference that makes. I don't usually scrape acquaintance on the front porch."

"This makes me a bit breathless," he said, panting a little. "You might feed me a peanut. I'm 'most starved."

"What a selfish girl I am!" she cried remorsefully. "I forgot you might be going out to dinner, yourself!"

"No matter," he lied cheerfully, "I telephoned my hostess that I was unavoidably detained, just now, and

rang off before she asked how." "Are you going to tell?"

He looked at her and laughed. "Not till I know you better."

"How do you intend to get acquainted, pray tell?" she asked, with a toss of her head. "This is no introduction, you know, though I appreciate your kindness, and I warn you you'll find it hard."

"If I told you you'd know and thwart me, maybe," he laughed. "But I am not going to let this be the last time I unlock a door for you. Only, later, I hope it will not be with a burglar's tool but with a civilized latchkey. By the way," he asked, smiling down at her, "who is it that laughs at locksmiths? I don't."

The hot color flew to her face and she stamped her slippers foot on the cold stone.

"I hope I'll have a quicker door-opener than you are," she cried impatiently. "How long does it usually take?"

For answer he swung open the door and held out his hand to help her step stiffly into the warm air of the dark hall. She felt for the electric switch and turned on the light as she slipped his overcoat off into his hands. Here, in the light of the shaded globes, she looked almost pretty, but she wasn't what he called a pretty girl. He summed her up, mentally, as his kind of a girl, and he felt glad to have been of service to her.

"You are ever so good," she said, giving him her hand. "And I thank you many times. If it were ever possible that we might know each other I should be very glad to redeem the reputation for impatience that I have made for myself this afternoon. Good-night and good-bye."

She was very gracious, but he felt

dismissed and somewhat chilled when he found himself on the porch again with the door between them. He could think of so many things to say, now that it was too late. What was her name? Did she know him? Had she taken cold standing out there so long? And, oh! where was she to get her dinner anyhow? He lifted his finger toward the bell-button and then turned away abruptly. She probably thought him impertinent enough already, without his adding to his sins an invitation to dinner. Girls were a sealed book to him, except his sister, and she was different and didn't count.

It cost him a box of chocolates and tickets to the theater to pacify this same sister, the peace-offerings being accepted in a somewhat grudging spirit, since her curiosity was still unsatisfied.

"You boys get so mysterious as soon as you grow to be business men," she said, as she watched him eat his warmed-up dinner. "You think we don't mind being put off with a 'Maybe I'll be able to tell you about it later.'"

Jimmie laughed.

"You needn't worry, Josephine," he answered. "It wasn't a scrape I got into, but a good deed that ought to shine in a naughty world and doesn't, because I don't believe in letting my right hand know the good charities of my left."

As the curtain fell on the second act that evening he leaned over to his brother-in-law and made his first inquiry.

"By the way, Charley," he asked, "who's the old codger who lives in five hundred and seven on your street?"

"It isn't a codger," Josephine put in. "It's Mrs. Bridges and her

niece, Miss Van Sutten. They're coming Tuesday evening to my musicale that you refuse to grace with your presence, James Coxe. You might as well be an old hedgehog for all the sociability there is in you."

"Did I say I wouldn't come?" he asked, much grieved. "If I'd known how much you cared I certainly wouldn't have declined. I'll be there bright and early, never fear. I shall have to do something to disprove your alarming opinion of me, that's certain."

"You're a dear!" she cried contentedly. "I'll take back the hedgehog."

Alas for the hopes of mere man! Miss Van Sutten was stout and stupid, and her eyes were a characterless blue.

"We had such a scare the other day—New Year's Day," she remarked in a frantic effort to be entertaining. "Burglars, you know; wasn't it awful?"

"I haven't heard of it," Jimmie replied, his eyes on each new-comer in turn. "Tell me about it."

"We found the marks of the instrument on our door. There they were when we came home, you know."

Jimmie became suddenly interested. "Did any one see them?" he asked.

"No, we were all out," she said, much flattered. "We let Anne go early in the morning and we left at one."

"At one? How many are there in your household?"

"Just the three of us. One would think you were Sherlock Holmes, Mr. Coxe."

"I beg your pardon, but I like that sort of thing. Are you sure you haven't a sister?"

"Why, Mr. Coxe!"

Who, then, was the girl he had rescued, and what was she doing there? Had he, in admitting her to that house, unwittingly become accessory to a burglary? Perish the thought! Not with those eyes!

"What did you lose?"

"Oh, nothing. The door needs revarnishing, that's all."

Jimmie involuntarily slipped his hand into his pocket and then drew it out again. What would she have thought if he had offered to foot the bill for repairs?

"Josephine," he said, as the last guest bowed his good-night, "I want to meet a certain girl, and if you know her you must ask her here next time, and be sure to ask me too. A dinner would be best, and I'll take her in."

"What's her name and where does she live?"

"Why—I don't know."

Josephine raised her eyebrows. "Well, what does she look like?"

"Ah, there I have it!" he cried gaily. "Brown eyes, fluffy brown hair and a soft blue dress."

"Just like a man! As if she always wore that dress! How do you know it's soft, anyhow?"

"Why—I helped her put on my coat."

"Ah! Where did you meet her?"

"I haven't met her yet, but I want to."

"Did you see her on the street car, at the theater or in some one's house?"

He shook his head.

"Well, then, all I can say is, Jimmie Coxe, that you need a chaperon!" she cried scornfully. "I don't care to make the acquaintance of your friend."

Jimmie had intended full confession, but after this discouraging beginning he decided to pursue his search by himself. It would be

interesting to see if he could meet her, if only for the sake of being able to triumph for a moment over those dancing eyes.

Jimmie became so diligent in his attendance at social affairs that Josephine relented so far as to see that he met every brown-eyed girl in her circle of friends and acquaintances. There were all varieties of them, and Jimmie suffered many things at their hands that spring. It was a theory of his that girls were either too frivolous or over-learned, but he had always excepted Josephine and wondered to himself how such a trump could tolerate the others. Now he understood there might be at least one more of her kind, and that one a girl in a blue dress. If she did not attend pink teas and musicales he would go to lectures and the theater—Oh, and to church! But what church? Josephine was a Presbyterian and he went with her when he had no very excellent excuse for staying at home, but he did not expect to see *her* there. She looked more made to carry dainty prayer-books than a heavy Oxford Bible. He therefore attempted the Episcopal church for several Sundays, astonishing even Josephine by his zeal, but finally gave it up. He stood and sat at all the wrong times and he lost his place every time the lady in the next pew found it for him. He decided it was no use the very Sunday he chanted something he

should have read and the laugh of his neighbors bothered him. Besides, it was too much of an undertaking to go to all the churches—it might take years, for he was unlucky and would be sure to go when she was absent. There was no sure-



DRAWN BY E. A. NELSON

"Jimmy became diligent in his attendance at social affairs."

place than society if it took all the season—and it did.

It grew to be a habit with him to look up at windows and down through cars in search of one face, though he had begun it in fun, and

he planned many sudden meetings that never took place, with all the optimistic hopefulness of his nature. He felt assured that they would meet some day, so he was not totally taken off his feet when they did.

She was seated at the farther end of the rear car of a well-filled elevated train when he boarded it down-town one evening early in spring, and that she was far from comfortable was evident at once. A suit-case at her feet was cumbersome, but it by no means caused her the annoyance she seemed to experience from the conversation of the man who sat next to her. The guard had a friend in the forward car and spent little time on the platform, so there was no help from that quarter, and she hesitated to make a protest and become conspicuous in the eyes of her curious fellow-passengers. While she hesitated, the man continued to remark about the weather, travel and the recent strikes, with the ready wit of his kind, and the situation began to be unbearable. Jimmie noted the angry flush and the defiant tilt to her head as he came through the car and stood beside her, and he smiled down at her as he raised his hat.

"Good evening, Miss Scaggs," he said distinctly. "Is there anything I can do for you?"

"Oh, Mr. Coxe!" she cried gratefully. "It might help if you stood there for a little while."

"It's hard to talk standing up," he said meaningly. "So if this gentleman will be kind enough to give me his seat I think he'll find another in the front car."

"This gent a friend of yours?" the man laughed insolently.

"I certainly am," Jimmie replied calmly. "Did you hear what I said?"

"Well, then, all right." The man

surrendered, and slouched slowly out of their car."

"You must think I'm always getting into trouble," she said hesitatingly, as he sat down. "I guess I am, too. You see, I didn't know it was so late—my train was delayed four hours coming from Denver. I was to be met, but Wilkins must have thought he'd missed me, for I couldn't find him. I was afraid of the depot cabs, they look so dreadfully dirty, and I was in too much of a hurry to wait. You did rescue me so nicely," she added with a sigh of relief. "No one noticed there was anything wrong apparently. What must you think of me?"

"I don't dare tell," Jimmie laughed. "I am gladder than I can say to see you again, Miss Scaggs."

"Where did you get that awful name?"

"First thing that popped into my head. Aurelia Scaggs was a lean individual who used to sew for my mother when I was a little shaver. Doesn't seem to fit you, somehow."

"There are prettier names."

"Yes, I thought wildly of—well, of making you out to be a Coxe, but thought better of it."

"Yes, Scaggs is better," she said hastily. "How slowly we're going!"

"Do you think so?" he asked regretfully. "You'll be shutting the door on me again, pretty soon."

"You know how to open it," she laughed. "I'd suspect you of being a burglar if I didn't know better, Mr. Coxe."

"Then you've been making inquiries?"

"The name was on the handkerchief," she said, flushing. "You left it, you know."

"I rejoice that my possessions can give such a good report of me. I have not been so fortunate in regard

to you, and I am not yet certain as to just what you were doing on that porch."

"Miss Van Sutten is my cousin, and I have a key to her house."

"So it's Miss Van Sutten who gave me the good send-off? I never fully appreciated her before."

She tapped her foot impatiently.

"I had your property and naturally wished to return it," she said sharply. "So I intended to ask my cousin to see that you received it."

"But after receiving a certificate of my character you decided to keep it as a souvenir?"

"I did nothing of the kind!"

"I suppose the mystery will never be solved," he said with a sigh. "It won't cost you a fortune if you'll hire me to carry your suit-case."

"Thank you," she replied icily, "but I telephoned Phil to meet me at the Fullerton Avenue station."

Jimmie was losing ground as the train was gaining, so he began to despair.

"I've done everything I can to get acquainted," he said dolefully, "and this is the way I'm treated. I don't even know who you are."

"You have considerable curiosity,"



DRAWN BY E. A. NELSON

"You must think I am always getting into trouble."

she replied, laughing lightly. "But I'll tell you I am Eleanor Winthrop, awaiting a scolding from her loving family for being so foolish as to be here now."

"And Phil?" he asked in sudden dread. "He isn't your——?"

"My what?" she asked, puzzled. "Oh—well, what if he is? What difference does it make?"

"A good deal—to me."

"Phil is sixteen and a dear. He walks on the sides of his feet to keep his shoes from squeaking when he thinks I have a headache."

"But how am I to know more of you?"

"Is it necessary?"

"Isn't there something due me? Rescued princesses used to be more gracious."

She pondered a moment.

"You may ask my cousin to bring you to call," she said at length.

"That will begin it properly."

"And the end?"

"That isn't now."

"Then I may consider myself accepted?"

"What?"

"As a friend."

"I suppose I'll have to," she said ungraciously. "You have been so

kind on two uncomfortable occasions."

"You don't give me much encouragement."

"You don't seem to need it. There is Phil, now, just coming up the platform."

"Is that all you're going to say to me?"

"If you insist," she said, taking the suit-case from him at the door, "I'll tell you this—" her mocking eyes flashed up at him. "After you left me to go for the locksmith, I found my key in my pocket and—waited."

The guard closed the door behind her with a vicious bang.

"Wrightwood the next!" he said.

The Use of the Margin

BY RUTH ELMA WHITE

Her name was Athena. It was the only name good enough. Her father was a Greek professor, who beheld in his infant daughter all the possibilities, from Sappho down. She was brought up according to Plato. Her maiden aunts clothed her in impossible gowns, and arranged her splendid hair peculiarly.

When she went to college the Greek Grammar coursed in her veins, and she was the one pride of her father's heart. The boys said she was a sight. When she came back, four years later, she knew no Greek, and was the one puzzle of her father's mind. The boys said she was a stunner. Blessed boon of a college course!

And it was two years later that she married Tom Jones.

Thereupon the maiden aunts gave up life and translated *Æschylus*. Her father regarded her with resignation, and said: "Perhaps you can

educate him, my dear." And he willed her the library he had meant to leave the maiden aunts.

"You're a brick to marry me, in the face of the family ideals," declared Tom. "I'll never forget it of you."

Athena ruffled his hair irrelevantly, and to herself she said, with unwonted profanity: "The family ideals be hanged."

Now all this is Athena sober. The sad tale I have to tell you is of Athena drunk.

After a summer season of tennis, boating, and enthusiastic housekeeping, Athena went to a lecture. She was invited by a club woman to hear a lion of the day. "A second Emerson," the papers said, and the club women raved. Athena protested inwardly, but went, in order to be polite, also out of curiosity.

And it was there that she drank

the fatal draught. The cool marble statues in the corners of the wall; the softened light which gave the club ladies the classic tone they sadly lacked in the sunshine; the vibrant, too sympathetic voice of the speaker—all these helped to Athena's undoing. The lecturer spoke on The Use of the Margin, and strenuous and severe as were his admonitions, they went to her head like new wine. They awakened all her latent inheritance from a long line of departed scholars. Then it was that Athena found that the Greek Grammar still coursed in her veins.

She walked home as with winged slippers, and prepared the dinner with thoughts Olympian. The soup that night tasted like nectar to Athena, albeit Tom thought it far too salty.

After dinner Tom looked up from his evening paper ready to admire whatever silky, beady thing his wife might happen to be making. His face grew blank when he saw the calf-bound Virgil that had been her father's latest gift.

"What in thunder has got over you?" he queried, and requeried before the bent head was lifted.

"Using my margin," she replied briefly, and went behind the Virgil again.

Tom leaned over and scanned the perfectly blank margins of the page.

"Do you know," said his wife, "these hexameters are perfect? Let me read you some."

"Well, that'll be all right about those hexameters," said Tom, as soon as he could recover his speech; and Athena gave a disappointed sigh.

After Athena went to bed Tom finished his box of best cigars. But the smoke clouds, at which he stared appealingly, refused to shape themselves into a solution, and finally he decided to sleep over it.

The next morning he went out to the kitchen to hurry up the breakfast a bit. On the table lay an open volume of Browning. "Are the chops done?" he asked. "No, dear," she replied, "I'll have to give you just oatmeal this morning. I have been reading *Paracelsus*. Isn't it splendid?"

"I don't know," said Tom, as he carried in the bread. "And," he added with classic brevity, "I don't care a darn."

At his office he reflected, and resolutely faced the worst. What if Athena should turn out like the maiden aunts? What had he done to deserve it?

He went home early, and found Athena in the dining-room. She greeted Tom with a start, and hurried out to the kitchen. The roast was in the oven, but all the draft was off the stove. Athena looked so distressed that Tom laughed loudly, if not heartily.

"Cooking it backward, girl? If I hadn't come home soon there'd have been a live cow running around the kitchen."

They went back into the library, and Tom began to recount the day as vividly as possible. His wife usually delighted above all things in this evening rehearsal. But it takes two to make even an entertaining monologue, and soon Tom's tongue wouldn't go.

Athena took up her Browning and handed Tom the paper. "It is really amazing," she explained, "how much reading one can get in between times. It troubles me to think how many moments I have wasted."

Tom read the paper for ten minutes before he discovered that it was the paper of the day before, and that he was reading the Woman's Page. As he was about to throw it aside in disgust, his eye fell on the headlines

of a report of the lecture before the Culture Club, *The Use of the Margin*, by the celebrated young Dr. Ovid Smith. He read it through, and the scales fell from his eyes. Many a man would have reasoned with her. But Tom disliked to reason above all things. "Besides," he said to himself, "it's in the blood, and I've got to be careful."

That night he smoked his merschaum; but this time the smoke clouds took shape.

Athena woke late the next morning. In the dining-room she found Tom, seated in his leather chair and holding the unabridged dictionary.

"What in the world are you doing?" she asked.

"Just using my margin, dear," Tom answered gravely. "Do you know, it is surprising how many new words one can learn before breakfast?"

His wife looked a trifle puzzled. Before starting for his train Tom loaded himself up with the new Virgil and the Browning. "I hope you won't need them," he said to his wife. "I must read some of these hexameters on the train. And perhaps I can do *Paracelsus* while the fellows go to lunch. It troubles me to think how much time I have wasted," and he went off without kissing her good-bye.

That night, after a very delicious dinner, at which Tom was distressingly preoccupied, he retired to the library and picked up the encyclo-

pedia. Athena made a little uncertain movement toward the Virgil, but took her work bag instead, and began to embroider Tom's dress-suit scarf. Her husband watched her over the edge of the Britannica, but he held on to his book grimly, and answered her in semi-monosyllables. "Look where you grab, and hold on like the deuce," was Tom's motto, and his business rivals knew what it meant.

Presently he awoke with a start. The Britannica had fallen on his toes. He glanced slyly at his wife. She looked so amused, and so altogether sane, that Tom was sorely tempted. But he picked up the book and bade his wife good-night, saying that he meant to get up early and read until breakfast time. He awoke two or three times during the night with the suspicion that Athena had been giggling. But each time she was snoring very audibly.

The breakfast next morning was so good that Tom forgot to read while he ate. But after breakfast he said with visible self-control, "If I come home early, could we do a little Browning together?"

Athena shrieked. When she found her voice, she said: "It's all right to kill or cure, Tom, but you don't have to do both. And if you ever guy me about this as long as you live, Tom Jones, I'll run off and join the Culture Club."

"So help me, Zeus!" said Tom fervently, as he rearranged his hair.

Tom's Serenade

BY HAYDEN CARRUTH

"It's all right when a man's courting a young girl," Grandma Batterson said, "to throw in some of these romantic fixings. Of course all such things are just simply b'iled-down foolishness, but young men will do it, and as it don't last long there ain't much harm done. When Hiram was a-courting me he done his share of it—valentines, and poetry, and all that—but he got over it and it never seemed to hurt him none. But when a man's courting a widow—good land!"

"But," protested Miss Bates, who was a spinster much given to reading the works of Sir Walter Scott, "if Tom marries Mrs. Watkins he'll most likely never have a chance to court a young girl and be romantic over her. It's his only chance. If it's in him it's got to come out now or never, I guess."

"Let it be never then," snapped Mrs. Batterson. "Getting a family and a house 'n' lot throwed in ought to reconcile him to bottling up a little romance."

But Tom Appleby, in his courtship of the handsome young widow Watkins, didn't bottle up.

Tom, like Mrs. Batterson's spouse, had indulged in poetry and valentines. Nobody but Tom and the widow knew to what extent the poetry had been carried. Tom was not a working, practical poet; in fact, he had never sus-

of being even a theoretical poet till after the widow came into his ken. To know her, Tom thought, was enough to make an active, producing poet of any man who could read and write. The widow was certainly an attractive person, scarcely twenty-five, if she was so much. To be sure, there were what cold-blooded people call encumbrances in the shape of a couple of small children; but Tom liked children. He had never realized how much he liked them till he saw the widow's two cherubs. The only thing that troubled Tom was the question, when he came to carry the widow off on a white horse, what should he do with the children? It seemed to Tom that the fellows who write the romantic books ought to add an appendix clearing up one or two such obscure points in the case where the lady is a widow. As for Mrs. Florence Watkins herself, a widow now of some two years' standing, it was no secret that she was encouraging Tom. She was known, however, to be a practical person, and it was whispered that she could have dispensed with some of his romantic manifestations.

The very day after the amiable Mrs. Batterson had promulgated her Theory as to How a Widow Should be Courted it occurred to Tom that he had not yet serenaded his lady love. "I wonder why the dickens I never thought of it," said Tom to him-



"Grandma Batterson" pected himself



"Miss Bates."

self. "I'll do it—I'll do it tonight. The last day of June—the very time for it!" Instantly he began to put the project into form. He had a guitar—the exact thing. In ten minutes Tom was in the privacy of his room practicing all the love songs he knew to the accompaniment of the guitar.

Tom was not certain as to the proper hour a serenade ought to come off, but it clearly shouldn't be until the lady had retired; after that, perhaps, the sooner the better. Rivertown was a town of steady habits, and the widow especially, as a practical person, was known to keep early hours—on the evenings when Tom didn't call. Accordingly it was not much after nine o'clock when Tom clasped his guitar under his arm and issued forth. As he went down the front walk he happened to glance back and saw the new moon over his left shoulder. He involuntarily gave a little shiver, and pressed the guitar to his side. A string snapped with a dull twang and Tom turned back to make repairs, looking somewhat solemn. He never liked to see the new moon over his left shoulder, and on his present errand it seemed particularly ominous. Surely the moon, of all things, ought to favor him.

Tom adjusted a new string and put some additional ones in his pocket. Then he started out again, paying no attention to the scoundrelly moon, which was almost below the horizon anyhow. On the corner he met his friend Sam Rogers.

"Hello, Tom; where you going?" asked Sam cheerfully.

Now Tom had expected some such meeting, and had craftily prepared for it. The moon might get the advantage of him, but he was determined that no mere human being should do so. Turning his honest

blue eyes on Sam in the light of the oil lamp on the corner, he said: "Just up to Henry Blowfield's. He's got a new mandolin and wanted me to come up and practice with him." Tom started on.

"Bully," returned Sam. "I'll go along. I'll take his fiddle and we'll have a trio that'll knock the spots off'n Theodore Thomas."

Tom's preparation had not included this, and he stood rooted to the spot. "Why—why," he stammered at last, "you see—er—what time is it, Sam?"

"Little after nine."

"Oh, thunder!" said Tom, trying to throw extreme astonishment into his voice; "I didn't think it was more'n eight. Hank'll be abed. I must get home and roll in myself."

"Come off!" ejaculated the amiable Sam. "Hank'll be up all right if he's got any sort of a new music contraption. Hank's no chicken."

"Well—er—I am. That is, if it's as late as that I'm not going. Good night," and Tom turned toward home.

"All right," answered Sam pleasantly, and he went on down the street. At the second corner he stopped and bowed his head in thought for a full minute. Then he slapped his leg, suppressed a laugh which seemed to rack his whole frame, and headed for the postoffice. There were a half-dozen of his choicest friends lounging about this headquarters of the village life.

"Fellers," said Sam, holding in the laugh by main force, "Tom Appleby has gone up to serenade Mrs. Watkins. I think it's our duty to go up and help him. Them in favor will signify the same by saying 'aye.' Hey? The 'ayes' have it!"

While these brotherly proceedings were going on, Tom Appleby was

engaged rather oddly for a man hurrying to bed. As Sam's footsteps died away Tom struck across some vacant lots, headed for a back street. For one bound upon so gentle an errand, Tom was surprised to find how much he felt like a criminal. If he had been starting out to rob the village bank he could not have felt more guilty. His progress, too, was marked by the most startling noises as he stepped on dry twigs and stumbled against tin cans. Then he fell over a cast-away wash-boiler, and a dog up by a house set up a terrific barking. Tom backed against a cherry tree and held his breath. A door in the house opened, and against the square of light Tom could see the stub tail of the dog standing straight up. The dark figure of a man appeared in the doorway and Tom heard, "Sic 'em, Tige!" in a vindictive tone.

Thus admonished, the dog advanced. Tom sidled around the tree, threw the guitar over his shoulder, and, retaining his connection with it by holding a string-end in his teeth, he crawled up the tree. After a minute or two the man disappeared and the door closed. The most cheering view that Tom was able to take was that the man had gone after a gun. But he did not appear again, and the dog seemed gradually to lose interest in the affair. From a sharp, choppy bark he trailed off into a deep, rumbling effect, apparently addressed in a general way to the neighborhood; and finally he retired altogether. Tom cautiously descended, chewing nervously at the string, and carefully picked his way toward the street. Just before he reached it he walked plump into a wire fence which he was morally certain had been erected since dark, as there was never any fence there before. How



DRAWN BY EDGAR BERT SMITH

"Practicing all the love songs he knew."



"Tom crawled up the tree."

ever, it wasn't barbed wire, and Tom carefully lowered the guitar on the other side and then crawled through. Safely in the street at last, Tom tucked the guitar under his arm and trudged on.

Tom was beginning to hope that the evil influence of his sinister view of the moon had ceased, and was mentally rehearsing his serenade when he spied the forms of a couple coming down the street. He was not going to take any more chances on meeting friends; so, as he was just in front of Squire Purdy's house, the steps of which were only three yards from the sidewalk, he turned in quickly and sought the shadows of the vine-covered front piazza till the couple should pass.

The house was dark, and Tom tiptoed his way very carefully, holding his breath, the only sound he made being the ridiculously loud thumping of his heart, an organ which not even the widow had ever caused to beat so wildly before. The couple came nearer. Tom could make out by peeping through the vines that they were walking arm-in-arm and talking earnestly. The next moment they turned in and sat down on the top step. It was Jenny Purdy and her best fellow, Seymour Hunt.

They sat down on the top step, keeping on with their earnest and confidential talk. Tom was well toward the other end of the veranda, and they spoke so low that he could catch but little of what they said, but what he did hear seemed very silly. However, Tom was not there to hear what they said, and he only wished they would cease saying anything and give him a chance to proceed on his own important business. But at the end of what seemed like hours, though it had been only a few minutes, they showed not the least sign of stopping.

The notion suddenly flashed upon Tom that they might sit there till midnight. He was standing in a strained attitude and had not dared to move a muscle, and he had omitted every other breath and drawn the intervening ones lightly ever since they came; consequently the situation was not pleasant for Tom. He waited another hour (that is, five minutes) and then determined on action. He twisted his neck and found that there were no vines at the other end of the piazza, and it seemed to him that he might possibly drop quietly off on the lawn and escape unnoticed. With one foot he took a long, cautious backward step. The foot descended on something which shot

out from under him, and Tom went down, while one of the children's castiron railroad cars went clattering along the piazza floor and down the steps close to the couple. The girl screamed and the young man jumped up. Tom gave a mighty flop and a roll, something like a tame seal in a tank, and landed on the ground at the end of the piazza. Then he got up and ran like a football player.

There was a croquet ground right there which Tom went through, but without any special delay. He could feel his feet hooking up wickets at every step, but as the wickets always flew off at the next step Tom didn't stop to worry about it. What happened at the house after he left he never knew, though as he cut across the vegetable garden and with some difficulty crowded through the hedge, he thought he heard the voice of Mr. Purdy from an upper window asking the young folks what they were doing down there.

Once through the hedge, still hugging his guitar, Tom proceeded cautiously but somewhat rapidly around a barn and out into a side street. It was still some distance to the widow's, but as he met with no further delays he was not long in covering it. Her cottage stood in the middle of a half-acre of ground, with a number of trees and considerable shrubbery about it, and with hedges dividing the place from its neighbors.

It had seemed to Tom "With one foot he took a long, cautious, backward step."

by daylight to present an ideal setting for a serenade, but as he now stopped and peered in at the darkened house he was not so sure about it. It occurred to him that the widow kept a dog, one Ponto, of a rather sour disposition. Ponto knew Tom well enough ordinarily, but he now wondered if the creature would recognize him in his present guise of a gay troubadour. Further, it seemed a question if Ponto, with



DRAWN BY EDGAR BERT SMITH

his hard and somewhat Puritanical nature, would approve of any serenade. But Tom knew that Ponto was usually kept in the house at night; besides, it was no time to pause to enquire into canine psychology; so he let himself in at the driveway gate and approached the house cautiously.

All was dark and silent. He was not quite certain which room the lady occupied, but he thought that a certain south window opened into it, and beneath this he determined to pour forth his lay. The selection



“He could feel his feet hooking up wickets at every step.”

of this had been a matter of earnest thought. He had considered a number of the popular songs of the day and rejected them as being altogether too frivolous. It had seemed to him that Thomas Moore ought to supply the need, but search had failed to reveal anything which altogether did so. He had finally halted between Bayard Taylor's "From the Desert I Come to Thee," and Shelley's "Lines to an Indian Air," and had decided on the latter (after assuring himself that Indian did not refer to our own noble savage), with perhaps the other as a sort of encore if everything went well.

Tom touched the guitar strings gently (for the time being it was to him a lute) and found that the night air had made retuning necessary. Very gently Tom performed this operation. Then he paused and listened. All was still. Once he thought he heard a slight sound like a snore—but, no, impossible! Tom felt guilty for having remotely thought of such a thing. It was, no doubt, the breeze sighing in the tree tops. The breeze ought to sigh in the tree tops, anyhow. Then assuming a romantic attitude, with his eyes cast up at the faint stars, he struck a few soft notes from the guitar and began in a fine tenor voice:

"I arise from dreams of thee
In the first sweet sleep of night."

Through the darkness, from a clump of Japanese quince bushes, there came this volley in deep, guttural, sarcastic tones:

"Go on!"
"Come off!"
"Get out, Tom!"
"Don't take on so!"
"Oh, Tommy—*Tommy!*"

"What you giving us, old man?—
you ain't been to bed yet!"



DRAWN BY EDGAR BERT SMITH

"The section of lattice-work was loose, and he crawled under."

"Betrayed by Sam Rogers!" gasped Tom under his breath; then like a shot he dropped to the ground among some geraniums which grew close to the underpinning of the house, where he knew his thoughtful friends in the bushes could not see him. For the next minute there was silence. Then from the quinces there came a chorus of dismal meows. Tom never stirred. A window opened above, there was a sharp "Scat!" in a female voice, and something white shot through the darkness, followed by a crash near the quinces as of a water-pitcher shattering itself against a lawn seat.

"Great Scott," whispered Tom to himself, "I thought a woman couldn't throw!" Again silence; then he heard the front door open, and sud-

denly with a terrific bark the austere Ponto shot out onto the lawn. For a moment Tom's blood froze in his veins; then with a furious volley of barks the dog rushed by the corner of the piazza and across to the quince bushes. There was a sound like the tearing and breaking of a hedge, and hurried footsteps in the lot beyond, with growls of baffled rage from Ponto. Tom saw that his turn must come. He drew himself quickly along the ground to the piazza. The section of lattice-work at the end was loose, and he wrenched it out and crawled under, replacing the lattice-work behind him and piling some stones against it. He was none too soon; the dog struck his trail and rushed back, paused under the window, and then followed to

where Tom disappeared. Then for what seemed an age to Tom the beast pranced sidewise around that piazza with his nose close to the lattice-work, and at every step uttering the most savage barks. Finally he tired out and lay down with his head close to the lattice, only occasionally giving vent to a bloodthirsty growl. This lasted for another age; then Tom heard the front door open softly, while the widow called, "Ponto, Ponto!" The dog obeyed reluctantly, the door closed and once more all was silence.

Tom Appleby, stretched on the sand under the piazza, was now uncertain what course to pursue, but he finally decided on delay. He thought it likely that the enemy in the quince bushes had been put to flight and would not return, but he shrewdly suspected that the widow had not heard the beginning of his serenade, so that now to continue it would make her think that he had been the cause of all the disturbance. He therefore decided to wait a half hour and then to creep out and begin as if he had just arrived and knew nothing of the previous uproar. Not once did the base thought of abandoning his design enter his mind; Tom was made of sterner stuff.

But the night had been slightly strenuous and Tom was tired. It was warm and the sand was soft. Before he knew it, Tom was asleep. This was truly the "first sweet sleep of night." Whether or not his dreams were of Her, Tom never knew. All he could ever remember

was of starting up suddenly and peeping through the lattice. When he did this he saw the first faint light of dawn was everywhere. He tore down the lattice feverishly. The coast was clear; now or never! He wriggled out, tuned the guitar once more, and again rolled his eyes at the dimming stars. Then:

"I arise from dreams of thee
In the first sweet sleep of night,
When the winds are breathing low,
And the stars are shining bright.
I arise from dreams of thee,
And a spirit in my feet
Has led me—who knows how?—
To thy chamber-window, sweet!"

His voice ceased, and he executed some rapid movements on the instrument in the true Spanish manner and then began again:

"The wandering airs they faint
On the dark, the silent stream—
The champak odors fail
Like—"

Above, the window opened, and Tom stopped spellbound. His beloved's head appeared just over the sill.

"Tom," she said in a loud whisper, "how nice of you! But please go away now. You've already woken up the baby, and Harry is nestling around in his crib. It's a beautiful piece. Write the rest of it out and send it to me."

Tom tucked the guitar under his arm and went home. A fortnight later they were married, and it was always the general belief in Riverturn that there never was a better stepfather than Tom.

Personal Pages by the Publishers

"RED BOOKIA"

A short time ago a prominent newsdealer addressed us regarding the increasing demand for RED Books and the fact that he had not been able to supply the wants of all his customers.

"**My patrons seem to be afflicted with Redbookia,**" were his closing words.

Thanks, Mr. Newsdealer, for the word. It gives us something to talk about.

There are 250,000 buyers now addicted to "**Redbookia**," according to the latest press count, and how contagious the habit may be can only be conjectured. It is safe to assume that four people at least read each book, so there you have **one million readers**, according to the arithmetic table. But what is more, the army of readers is increasing monthly.

We have many strange stories brought to our office. The art section of the magazine seems to come in for its share of criticism and suggestion.

The criticisms mainly touch on the question of printing our art studies on both sides of the page. It seems to have become a fad to decorate cozy places with THE RED Book celebrities. Naturally, printing on both sides destroys the value of one picture. But, good reader, did you ever consider that you can buy two books if you want them all, and thereby gratify your hobby?

Suggestions come to us for the early printing of this or that favorite actress. One reader recently requested a picture of Miss Maude Adams in one of her recent characters in the "very next issue."

The first forms of the issue following the next were off the press when

the request was received. Not that we are printing all the pictures that are called for, but merely as an illustration to the average reader of what it means to print a quarter million edition of a magazine and get it out on time, do we cite the case.

The path of the art editor verily is not a bed of roses. He recently discovered a rare treasure in one of the leading theaters of the country in the shape of a large picture containing twenty-one character studies of one of the leading actresses of the day. They were characters she had assumed from her early career to date—interesting and beautiful.

After much effort he obtained the consent of the manager of the theater to take the picture from the theater, provided he replaced it with another for the time of its absence; and provided the consent of the principal were obtained.

A telegram brought the consent very promptly and all was well. But lo, the pictures had been trimmed to fit the frame, so that the photographer's name was missing and the right of reproduction in doubt.

The pictures were promptly bundled up and forwarded to the place where the actress might be reached. The messenger carried his parcel to the theater and, after hours of patient waiting, the pictures were sent to her dressing-room, there to be identified as to their origin. They were graciously returned with the desired information and all was well—until the next day.

When the messenger discovered that one picture was missing, he returned to the theater that night and begged to be excused for his presumption, but he had brought twenty-one pictures and but twenty were returned.

"Of course," came the prompt reply of the secretary, "I knew that

Personal Pages by the Publishers

last night. Miss Marlowe did not like one of the pictures and destroyed it and begs that you will inform the manager of the theater, if any difficulty is experienced, that she is the guilty one."

We do not blame Miss Marlowe. We shall weather the storm, for we have located the photographer, thanks to her, and we shall be in position to substitute another, perhaps more interesting. Indeed, we thank her for the incident which gave us this opportunity to write the story. But this picture getting is not a sinecure.

The art editor tells us that the professional people generally have "Redbookia." It is evidenced in the galleries of Colonel Theodore C. Marceau, the Otto Sarony Company, Major Burrows' Sarony studio, in Falk's, in Schloss's; in fact, in the best studios of the country.

It all leads to one end. We want "Redbookia" to become the fashionable American habit. We shall do all that lies within our power to foster it.

The January number of *THE RED BOOK*, beginning the New Year, will be the largest and best number of this magazine that has ever been issued. More stories will be included than heretofore, and the same exacting standard of excellence has been applied as in the past. The best stories, the best illustrations, the best art supplement, the best cover; these are the ideals which *THE RED BOOK* holds before itself.

The January *RED BOOK* will contain a very strong story, entitled "IN SPITE OF THE LAW," by Helen Tompkins. It is a dramatic study of life and incident among the "moonshiners" of the South, with the love of a brave woman as the vital factor in the story. The author

is a master of her subject, her scenery, and her characters, and the story is bound to win favor.

"MARY-FULL-OF-GRACE" is the name of a unique story by Constance Morris that relates an episode of Paris art studio life quite outside the general run of such fiction, and the dramatic qualities in the story are matched by the delicacy of its treatment.

"THE QUEST OF ANNA PETROVNA," by Theodore Waters, is timely just now when Russian affairs are of such lively interest. It is a story of plot and counterplot in Moscow, with the discovery of certain secret documents in a vault of the Kremlin as the central feature. The author knows his Russia well, and the story possesses a verisimilitude which is not always found in stories of that northern land.

"THE FATAL SNOW SHOES," by Helen Palmer, is somewhat mystic, but there is a gentle satire running through the story that is even more fascinating than the mystery. The introduction of such an Indian legend into the prosaic winter house-party where the story occurs, proves a genuine success in this instance.

"TEDDY AND THE ACTRESS" is the name of a clever little story by Helen Burrowes Johnston, relating the experiences of a débutante who happens upon the star of the season, and finds her fruitful of interest.

Martha McCulloch-Williams, whose standing as a writer of delicate fiction and criticism is the highest, contributes a strong and artistic story entitled "A MAN'S CHOICE." It depicts the contact of a man of high ideals with a woman whom he loves, but who does not rise to his own standards of honesty.

In addition to the stories that have been indicated, there are a dozen others, no less attractive.